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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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No. 21

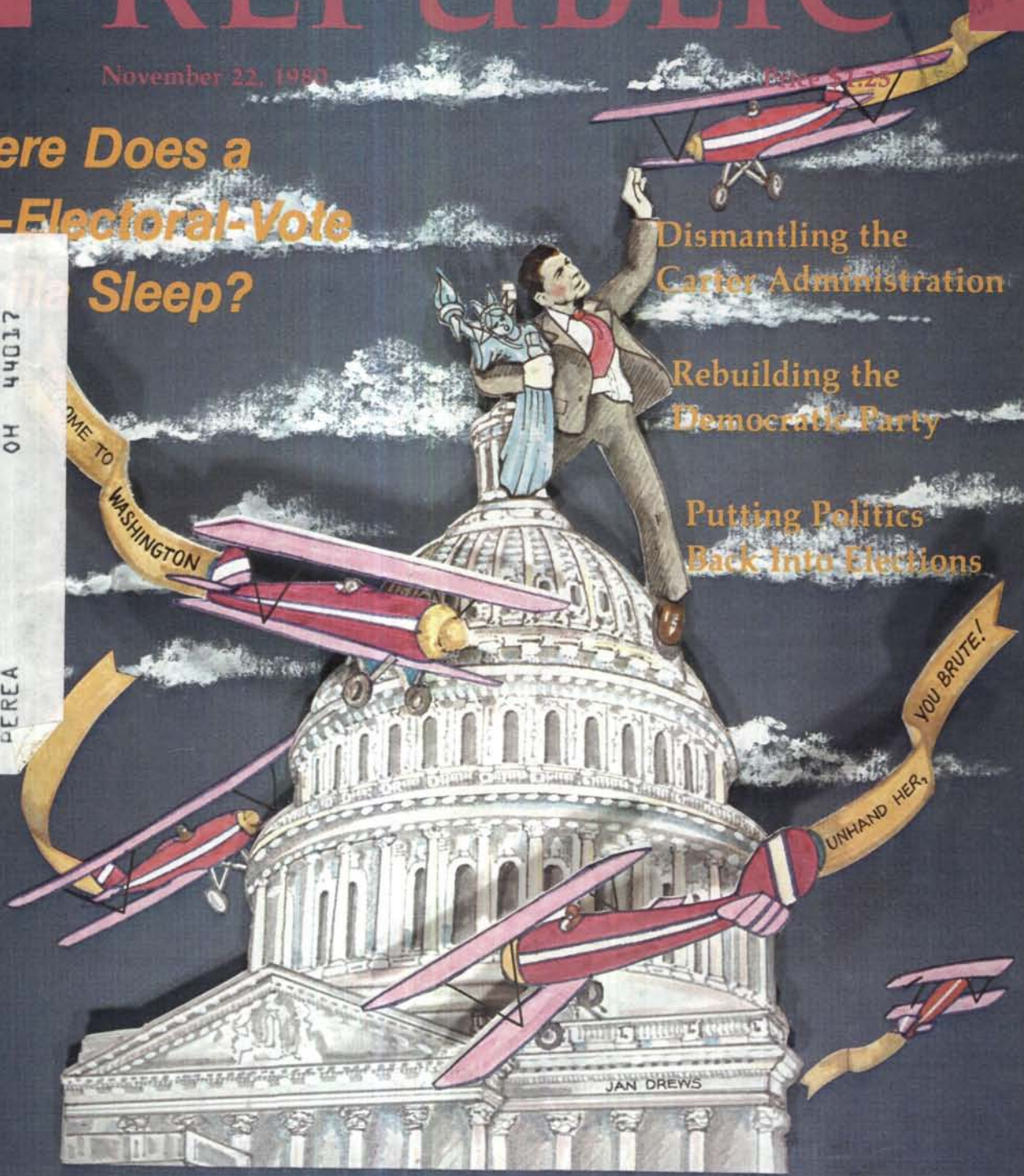
November 22, 1980

Where Does a 489-Electoral-Vote Sleep?

Dismantling the Carter Administration

Rebuilding the Democratic Party

Putting Politics Back Into Elections



Price Controls by 1983—Robert Lekachman

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TRB

from Washington
November 22, 1980

Which Reagan?

Arthur Burns is testifying. He arranges his leather tobacco pouch, matches, pipe, ash tray, glass of water, yellow pencil, and pad and, while senators and audience watch in fascination, begins in a low, judicious voice, weighing every word. He picks up the pipe, strikes a match, listens, replies (puff, puff), and puts down the match just before it burns him. It is a virtuoso performance. Two photographers kneel beside him. His left hand revolves in a gesture while the right holds a paper folder of matches.

This is the man of whom Richard Nixon said "Arthur speaks only to God, and to me, occasionally." This is the man who, before he was chairman of the Federal Reserve Board (1970-78), was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers (1953-56). Always he was the adviser of Republicans, the symbol of middle-of-the-road orthodoxy. He made a quiet trip to Washington in 1960 to tell Vice President Nixon, who was just preparing to run for the presidency, that a recession was coming and that Ike should stimulate the economy for the good of the nation and his party. Ike didn't and Nixon lost. Burns is a favorite of congressional committees, alternately testy and droll, placating and patronizing, who once listened to a harangue by Hubert Humphrey against unemployment and responded, "Well, Senator (puff, puff), I can only say that this is one of the wisest (puff), profoundest dissertations on the subject (puff, puff) that I have ever heard."

Now, at 72, he finds himself in a strange position indeed. He and other Republican fiscal conservatives are trying to advise a president-elect who believes in fairyland economics. Reagan is advised by a rival group of Republican activists, or populists, or "supply-siders," who argue that America's economic problems can be solved very easily. Just boost defense expenditures, cut income taxes 10 percent across the board each year for three years, and eliminate "waste and extravagance" from the budget (but not Social Security). That will balance the budget in three or four years. Inflation? Pooh!

It is all very strange. The stock market met the Reagan landslide with an all-time record of 84 million shares, and the Dow Jones industrial average zoomed up 16 points. But the next day it slid down 17.75 points. What did it mean? Reagan has made election speeches for two years and never has given precise economic details. He embraced the Kemp-Roth three-year, 30 percent tax cut proposal and orginally argued that this would so stimulate production (i.e., the "supply side") that it would pay for itself in Treasury revenues. Later he added the qualification that federal spending should be cut at the same time (all but defense). There were expressions of Republican dissent. Arthur Burns, as usual, worked from within. But George Bush, then a presidential candidate, called it "voodoo" economics. That criticism was easily met: Reagan named Bush his running mate. But Senator Robert Dole, Republican of Kansas, doesn't accept the new economics. He will be the new Finance Committee chairman.

The supreme intellectual achievement of the year, perhaps, was the operation by which wise old Arthur Burns and fellow orthodox economic counselors (Alan Greenspan, one-time economic adviser to Jerry Ford, George Shultz, Nixon's secretary of the treasury, and other Ford-Nixon alumni) worked out the September 9 speech for Reagan ("Strategy for Economic Growth and Stability in the 1980s"), which attempted to reconcile rival theories. It was like reconciling Galileo and the pope. The GOP tax populists are still there. They include Arthur B. Laffer of the University of Southern California, Senator William V. Roth Jr. of Delaware, Representative Jack F. Kemp of New York, and Jude Wanniski, head of Polyconomics Inc., a consulting firm. It promises to be an exciting year. Which Reagan did we elect—the tax populist or the Arthur Burns moderate?

I think we elected the moderate Reagan, and I suspect the ultraconservatives on one side and the tax populists on the other are going to start criticizing him right away. Some see the 1980 election as an ideological turning point, a great divide (and that figured in the result, too); but I believe that Senator Birch Bayh, the defeated three-term senator from Indiana, takes a sounder view: "I think it was basically an economic question," he says, "not a big philosophical turn-over." The nation is sick and tired of inflation and a little frightened; if Reagan can end it, more power to him. His credibility is deeply involved.

Can he do it without requiring sacrifice? One cause of the trouble is an endless spiral: wages go up and then prices go up, too. How do you break the chain? More productivity (the supply side) will help enormously. But somehow or other the wage-price spiral must be snapped; somebody must yield first. It involves what economists call the "incomes policy." (We shall all be talking economic jargon soon.) Alfred Kahn, Carter's chairman of the Council on Wage and Price Stability, sadly admits he failed. There were "guidelines" and voluntary efforts. "We're never going to beat inflation until we get an effective incomes policy," Kahn told the *New York Times* in a final interview. "There's just no way. I mean, wages are 65 to 70 percent of the final sales price."

Nixon tried to get through the 1974 oil crisis without sacrifice. He protected the consumer by refusing to let domestic gasoline rise to world prices. That persuaded Detroit to continue to make gas guzzlers. That meant Chrysler went bankrupt; that meant the Big Three car makers lost $3.5 billion in the first nine months of this year; that meant one in four auto workers now is idle, and that one in four cars sold is an import.

We have just elected the most pro-business administration since Eisenhower, and simultaneously restored the Senate to the Republicans for the first time since Ike. Reagan would love to return the nation to the era of Eisenhower tranquillity. Arthur Burns saw that period, too. But Burns knows that things are moving at a faster clip. It was all right for Ike's assistant, Howard Pyle, to say, "The right to suffer is one of the joys of a free economy, just as the right to prosper is." Or for folk-hero Ike himself to observe in 1953, "I believe that for the past 20 years there has been creeping socialism spreading in the United States." Reagan may sympathize with that but his speech of September 9 shows him capable of quite breathtaking change. He will be safer listening to pipe-puffing Arthur Burns.

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Correspondence

Cyprus still waits

To the editors:

Russ Hoyle's "Cyprus Waits" (*TNR*, October 4) contains some misleading information.

First, the "Afghanistan-style invasion of Cyprus" is an expression fabricated by the Greek propaganda machine in order to impress the US public and to gain sympathy from the majority of Americans who condemned the Soviet invasion. For Turkey, such an accusation has absolutely no connection with the truth. No parallel can be established between the two actions. The Turkish military intervention of 1974 was made in conformity with international agreements in order to prevent the Greek military junta's Afghanistan-style takeover of Cyprus, for the protection of the rights and the security of the Turkish community on the island as well as for the safeguarding of the independence and territorial integrity of the state of Cyprus.

The question of Cyprus did not originate with the Turkish intervention, but rather, from the endless Greek aspirations for eliminating independent Cyprus and its bicommunal and binational status and annexing the island to Greece.

The article does, however, correctly explain the Turkish Cypriot's economic difficulties. In fact, economic discrimination by international organizations and foreign governments in favor of Greek Cypriot government is making the Greek community more prosperous while the Turkish region suffers under the Greek Cypriot economic embargo. Currently the Cyprus question continues under UN auspices in a good atmosphere with the participation of the representatives of Turkish and Greek communities. We hope that those talks will lead to a lasting solution.

Ahmet Ersoy, Press Counselor
The Turkish Embassy
Washington, DC

Hope for American writing

To the editors:

In his alertness to the daily dangers of book biz and in his nostalgia for the 1850s and 1920s, Alfred Kazin doesn't even mention the ambitious and achieved writers of the 1970s ("American Writing Now," *TNR*, October 18). For Kazin and for his readers who might think only Ecclesiastes or *The Great Gatsby* could give solace in the parlous time he describes, I have some novels published in the last decade, if "now" can be stretched so far, that have just the lasting qualities Kazin says are absent in American writing. These novels are experimental but not effete, have a mastery of their form and age, know the languages of America and the history of the world, interpret our harrowing complexities, and make us wonder at their art. They do imagine, contra Kazin, the "import of the technological storm on our mental life"; this is exactly the achievement of much recent fiction. These authors aren't drifting without conviction; they're strong enough to put 10 years into a book, confident in writing 600 pages if the work and times require it.

I call these novels of the 1970s excessive, and mean that word as praise, for they have the mass and excess one finds in *Walden* ("I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be extravagant enough"), *Moby-Dick*, *The Golden Bowl*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, or *Lolita*; they exceed publishers' demands, readers' expectations, and formal conventions to create new models for consciousness to live in and look through. The novels have impedance, as if they needed to resist the reader to resist the time. They include *Gravity's Rainbow*—yes, the impacted encyclopedia of all the rest. A work nearly as full and without Pynchon's college humor is Joseph McElroy's *Lookout Cartridge* (1974), which begins as a detective story and ends as a novelistic analog computer. Even more than Pynchon, McElroy knows the age of cybernetics and uses its methods—recording, film, liquid crystals—as metaphors for his encompassing vision of the world as a collaborative network of informations. McElroy's other novels—*Plus*, *Ancient History*, *Hind's Kidnap*, *A Smuggler's Bible*, all published within the last 15 years—are dense with sciences and human response to them, a body of work that will have to be recognized when more critics and readers come to know what McElroy knows and makes into sophisticated fiction.

Don DeLillo's *Ratner's Star* (1976) is even riskier: for it is both about and an imitation of pure mathematics. Encoded in it is a history of mathematics from Pythagoras to Godel which DeLillo uses to measure the uses and abuses of scientific abstraction. The learning and imaginative rigor of *Ratner's Star*, like good mathematics, come to bear on our world, explain it, and help predict the future.

The commerce that smears all life, according to Kazin, is exhaustively understood by Joseph Heller's *Something Happened* (1974) and William Gaddis's *JR* (1975), which show how entropy gets internalized, instrumentalism goes home from the office, and professional lying trivializes every man's tongue. They are repetitive, frustrating, and fascinating, cautionary tales and massive imitative forms—*JR* a positive feedback or "runaway system" seemingly out of authorial control, *Something Happened* an infinite regress of mechanistic causality. Technology is in their background, turning life into waste.

Stanley Elkin's *The Dick Gibson Show* (1971) and Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* (1977) are elaborate, many-voiced, sometimes grotesque, and finally truthful accounts of the media and politics that Kazin deplores.

Whatever stamp makes books last, Kazin is "quite sure that most of our leading novelists and poets now just do not have it." I'm not sure, either, what makes a book permanent, but I do know that Americans have almost always taken time to catch up with their leading writers and that these seven novels—and there are others—have a density and authority that promise long shelf life. They'll be there, heavy, wide in the back, thick with life, waiting for readers with patience. It's not too soon to begin, for readers who want to know the state of the art and for Mr. Kazin, so that when he next assesses American writing he can tell us why our books—and not just our "literary culture"—are unworthy of the future.

Thomas LeClair
Department of English
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Birthday greetings

To the editors:

As of July 7, 1981, you will be two-thirds of a century old. Happy number 66. Now, please get on the ball and bring down the Reagan administration as effectively as you undermined Carter's.

Jim Lawing
Wichita, Kansas

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

November 22, 1980

The Democrats' Task

People said that the Republican party was dead in 1964 and they said it again in 1974. Obviously they were wrong both times. Now the same thing is being said about the Democratic party, just as mistakenly. The Democrats suffered a terrible shock on November 4, but there still is hope for recovery, possibly beginning with the 1982 elections.

The Democrats could come back one of two ways. One would be through a massive Republican failure. The other would be through an organizational and intellectual Democratic renaissance. The first is all too possible, given the complexity of America's problems and the simple-mindedness of Republican solutions. We hope, as citizens, that Ronald Reagan's programs will succeed in restoring the economy and enhancing US security. However, we fear that Reagan's apparent agenda of 10 percent tax cuts, nine percent defense increases, and two percent federal budget cuts will result instead in superheated inflation of a kind that Robert Lekachman suggests may cause Reagan to resort to wage and price controls (see page 18). Similarly Reagan's foreign policy agenda, while based on restoring American strength, may well lead to a weakening of America's position in the world. The US will be less secure without SALT II. If the US government abandons the cause of human rights (except toward communist countries), we will lose ground ideologically wherever people hope to be free.

Some people will take it as a signal of strength if Reagan appoints tough guys Alexander Haig as secretary of state and John Connally as secretary of defense (as the latest rumors have it). But a Connally appointment will mean that Reagan confuses appearances with reality. Far from a strong figure, Connally is willing to abandon any principle and sell out any friend to advance his aims. He is the conservative who imposed wage and price controls to get Nixon reelected. And to get himself elected, of course, he advocated dumping America's commitment to Israel to assure stable oil supplies from the Arabs. That proved to be a politically disastrous ploy. We think that putting Connally in charge of the nation's defenses would be just as risky for Reagan and the national interest.

On top of the failures that may befall the Reagan administration, it is entirely possible that the Republican party will suffer politically because of the extremist antics of its Senate majority. Its agenda includes a constitutional amendment against abortion, another amendment authorizing prayers in schools, enactment of a federal death penalty, restriction of the Freedom of Information Act, lifting of environmental and occupational health standards. The American public may be tired of excessive bureaucracy and regulation, but surely it didn't vote for the rightist policies that the Senate is likely to dish up.

But the Democratic party would be mistaken to depend for its resuscitation on a Republican collapse. The Democrats need to reorganize and rethink, and the quicker the better.

The first step has to be the selection of a new Democratic national chairman. The national party machinery should not be controlled for a second longer than necessary by Jimmy Carter's hand-picked factotum, John C. White. During his presidency, Carter did nothing whatever to assist the Democratic party financially or politically; he merely used it for his own ends. John White was his helper. White provided DNC jobs and cover for aides who later would run Carter's reelection campaign.

He did not maintain even the appearance of party-

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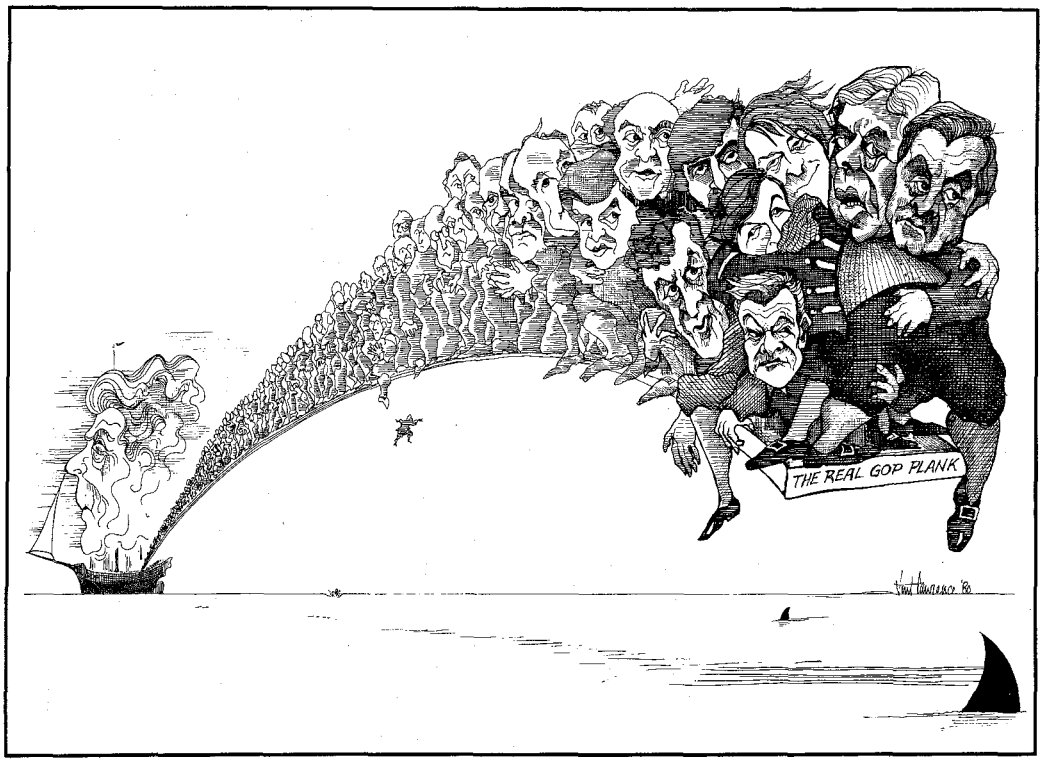

Vint Lawrence

unifying neutrality when Carter was challenged by Edward Kennedy. Under White the DNC was so preoccupied with service to the White House that it did nothing until after the August convention to organize a voter registration drive and a get-out-the-vote effort. It had no manpower or money to help Democratic Senate, House, and state legislative candidates. On the basis of this record, White is unqualified to serve as Democratic chairman during the party's out-of-power years. He cannot unify the party because Kennedy Democrats understandably distrust him. He has shown no aptitude for, or interest in, small-giver fundraising or grassroots organizing. Instead of trying to retain the chairmanship for a year before running for the governorship of Texas, White should announce that he will step down as soon as a successor is elected at the next Democratic National Committee meeting, preferably in January.

Who should take White's place? An avalanche of names has descended since November 4, among which there is no obvious choice. It's clear the new chairman should be someone willing and able to act on behalf of the party as a whole and be independent of any particular 1984 presidential hopeful. The ideal chairman would be able to raise money, organize an effective 1982 campaign, and act as a spokesman and an inspiration for a demoralized opposition.

We think it should be a disqualification, and not a recommendation, for a candidate for the chairmanship to claim he or she will act as a mere honest broker among the constituent groups of the Democratic party. Robert Strauss may have been effective in the post-1972 era, when it still was possible to think that Democratic success depended merely on cajoling blacks, Hispanics, women, McGovernite doves, and Jacksonian hawks to operate together in tenuous alliance. A great Democratic chairman would be someone who could help the party organize a new agenda on a basis other than a promise of government goodies for everybody.

We think it unlikely that any such agenda will be devised at a midterm Democratic issues conference such as the one that took place in 1978 in Kansas City or the one now scheduled for 1982. Most likely such an assemblage merely will serve as a vehicle for the passage of statements calling for more subsidies, quotas, and aid programs of the kind the voters decisively rejected two weeks ago.

Rather the new Democratic chairman should form a set of issues panels which would formulate new and more effective ways to address the country's problems. There is a consensus building in the Democratic party that old-style liberalism must be redefined for the 1980s. The problem, though, is that no one knows what the new agenda ought to be. We do know this much: it must take account of inflationary pressures, reduce energy dependence, provide efficient delivery of government programs, enhance American productivity and competitiveness, reduce welfare dependency, create new jobs, help the poor, and also carefully consider Soviet and other foreign threats. But how? In what order?

It isn't necessary for the Democratic party to have all its new answers worked out tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. But it has to begin thinking systematically about the problems tomorrow—or else it will have no answers by 1982.

Besides a new chairman and a set of new ideas, the Democrats need new presidential candidate selection rules that will prevent militant minorities or inexperienced nobodies from seizing the nomination, as in 1972 and 1976. Party professionals and elected officeholders should be accorded enhanced power in the nominating process, probably a bloc of 25 percent of the seats at the national convention. Such officials act as a keel for the party, preventing it from being blown by strong winds of ideological enthusiasm or media hype. The party also should dispense with the Carter rule that binds delegates to their candidate and prevents them from exercising independent judgment at the national convention. A case can be made even for restoring the winner-take-all primary system, which acts in party affairs like the electoral college does in general elections, emphasizing the importance of big

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states and diminishing the impact of small ones.

The nominating process also needs to be shorter, so that contesting for the nomination is not a year-long enterprise that can be entered into only by unemployed former officeholders or incumbents willing to ignore their official duties. The new politics Democratic reform movement gave the party George McGovern and Jimmy Carter as its presidential nominees. Without returning to the bad old days of boss rule, the party needs to do what it can do to ensure that it nominates the most experienced and electable candidate it can find in 1984—and someone who, if elected, could govern effectively and be reelected.

A First Step

Everyone agrees that the way this country chooses its public officials is a mess, and this past election provided persuasive evidence. Our campaigns are too long. They deliver too little for what they cost. They have fallen too much under the sway of political action committees financed by special interest groups. They are subject increasingly to the influence of proliferating independent committees, most of them ultraconservative, most of them skilled at negative smear campaigns, and none of them accountable to candidates for office. Can these problems be solved? Maybe not entirely, but they can be eased, and the way to begin is to repeal most of the election reforms enacted in the last decade.

The reforms that were supposed to eliminate many of our problems instead have aggravated most of them, had no effect on others, and created several completely new ones. The most notable change was a system of public financing for presidential candidates, which in 1980 doled out $90 million to 10 contenders during the primaries and the general election campaign. The law also limits individual contributions to office-seekers to $1,000, and imposes limits on expenditures by any presidential candidate who accepts public funds. Originally it also contained restrictions on spending by non-presidential campaigns, by political action committees, and by independent groups, and limited contributions by a candidate to his or her own campaign, but a 1976 Supreme Court decision ruled all these unconstitutional. To administer the law, Congress set up a Federal Election Commission, which also was struck down but was reestablished quickly within the constitutional guidelines laid down by the Court.

There are several reasons for the increasing length of presidential campaigns. The change in party rules that encouraged direct primaries over caucuses and conventions is one important factor. But another is public financing. To qualify for matching funds (under which the government "matches" all contributions up to $250), a candidate has to raise more than $5,000 in donations of $250 or less in each of 20 states. To find that many contributors in that many different states, a candidate has to get started early. The first candidate to try a marathon campaign was Jimmy Carter, who began stumping some two years before the 1976 election—in part to accommodate the new public financing laws. Anyone jumping into the campaign in January or February of the actual election year would find it nearly impossible to qualify for public funds in time to do much good. It used to be that candidates could get started later. Bobby Kennedy, for example—who got into the 1968 race in April and was able to raise $11 million in only 11 weeks—would have gotten nowhere under the new election reforms, despite his popularity and national reputation. His brother Ted, with the same assets and a much weaker incumbent president to challenge, felt compelled to begin his own 1980 campaign in October 1979—and he had the advantage of having several draft-Kennedy groups raising money since May. Phil Crane announced his candidacy in August 1978, John Connally in January 1979, and George Bush in May.

Though the contribution limits have held down the cost of campaigns effectively enough, they also have diverted campaign funds from the crucial business of communicating with the electorate and into efforts to comply with the law. It isn't unusual for 20 percent of a campaign's expenditures to go to keep the campaign on the right side of the law. Some of this expense serves a valuable purpose, such as providing the public with information about where a candidate's contributions come from. But much of it goes only to employ lawyers and accountants who know their way around the Byzantine labyrinth of federal election law. "As federal election law is increasingly refined, it resembles tax law, with the FEC doing for politics what the Internal Revenue Service does for taxes," writes Herbert Alexander of the University of Southern California, in the most recent of several books on campaign financing. If it weren't for the compliance problems, the money might be spent on actually getting a candidate's views across to the voters.

The rise of political action committees is another direct consequence of the 1974 reforms. A contributor can give $5,000 to a political action committee but only $1,000 to an individual candidate, so contributions that might have gone to candidates in the past now tend to go to PACs. Since the Supreme Court struck down the spending limit, it makes little sense to limit individual campaign contributions. In effect the law now says to the candidate: you can spend all the money you can raise, but the contribution limit will keep you from raising very much. Treating PAC contributions more leniently than individual donations makes no sense at all, unless you want to encourage special interests to get more involved in politics. Contributions from PACs are more likely to advance unpalatable interests than are those from individual citizens.

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"PAC money is *interested* money," a 1978 study noted.

> While those who run political action committees may not be successful in accomplishing their legislative designs, it is clear that they do have specific agendas for public laws. . . . [P]rivate individuals may also have policy outcomes in mind when they make contributions, but these are rarely linked to an organized lobbying effort.

The independent committees involved in several senatorial races as well as the presidential campaign also owe their success mostly to the limit on private contributions. The Supreme Court ruled that the federal government cannot restrict the spending of any group organized to help a particular candidate, as long as the committee doesn't coordinate its efforts with the campaign. Thus anyone who has contributed the full legal amount to a candidate has only one other way to help out: to give money to an independent committee, which can spend unlimited amounts to help the candidate. The wealthiest independent group this year was the National Conservative Political Action Committee, which worked successfully to elect Ronald Reagan and to defeat Democratic senators George McGovern, John Culver, Birch Bayh, and Frank Church. In all NCPAC spent more than four million dollars in the 1980 election. A candidate whose opponent is attacked by an independent committee, as McGovern et al. were by NCPAC, has the best of both worlds—his opponent gets smeared, but he can't be blamed for it.

Among the new problems created by the reforms is the weird logic they introduce into the presidential campaign. Besides forcing candidates to start campaigning so early, they also encourage them to stay in the race even after there is no hope of victory. As long as a candidate qualifies for matching funds, he or she has good reason to stay in, since the federal government will pay half of all campaign expenses. A candidate who accumulates debts likewise will stay in the race even if he or she is losing, just to keep the matching funds coming in.

The candidate most affected by the public financing system this year was John Anderson. In the Republican primaries matching funds clearly helped him despite his minuscule chance of being the GOP nominee. But they severely hampered his independent candidacy. To begin with, they impelled him to postpone announcing as an independent as long as possible, so he could continue getting public money. Then they provided his two major party opponents with a huge advantage: their campaigns were guaranteed nearly $30 million each, while his was guaranteed nothing. Anderson's only hope was to get loans to finance his campaign and then to qualify for public funds by getting at least five percent of the vote in the November election. This turned out to be a false hope, because banks wouldn't lend him money with only uncertain public funds as collateral. Once this became clear, Anderson might have dropped out. But in order to pay off other debts, he had to stay in the race in the hope he would qualify for federal money, which he did.

The law also has had the perverse effect of giving personally wealthy candidates a big advantage over those of modest means, since a candidate can spend as much of his own money as he wants. This loophole practically assured the reelection of West Virginia governor Jay Rockefeller, who spent $12 million on his campaign, most of it from his own pocket. One Libertarian party benefactor, millionaire David Koch, wanted to give half a million dollars or so to the party's presidential nominee. The only way he could do so was to run for vice president, so the party chose him as Clark's running mate.

What should be done to correct this dismal failure? First, the public financing system should be scrapped or at least substantially revised. It would be hard to shorten the campaign without either abolishing public funding or making it too easy for any fringe candidate to get federal money. But the lethal bias against independent and minor-party candidates could be ameliorated by providing matching funds to candidates who prove their seriousness by raising a specified amount of money—say one or two million dollars. Considering the caliber of candidates the two major parties have chosen in recent years, it hardly makes sense to actively discourage alternatives. Second, the contribution limit should be lifted, or at least raised substantially. If a citizen wants to help out a candidate, there is no wisdom in limiting his right to do so. In any case, it is impossible to keep him from doing so through other, more dubious, means, such as PACs and independent committees. Third, the reporting requirements should be radically simplified, so that candidates can spend their funds communicating their views to the voters rather than handling useless paperwork. One way to help would be to raise the minimum contribution which must be reported from its current $100 level to $500 or $1,000. In this inflationary age, one can safely assume that no politician can be bought for $100. The reforms enacted in 1974 haven't alleviated the problems they were aimed at, and they have created some new and equally serious ones. Now would be a good time to amend this mistake.

White House Watch

Transition Out

"I can tell you," Jack Watson told White House reporters November 6, "that a transition in is more fun than a transition out." Watson, a youngish Atlanta lawyer and one of those Georgians, headed the Carter transition team that prepared the takeover from the Ford administration in 1977. The President instructed him the morning after the November 4 election to oversee

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It Can Happen Here.

It was a quiet April evening, shortly before midnight, and Deanna Ussery had already gone to bed. The house was dark except for a nightlight in the bedroom of her eight-year-old daughter, Sheila Ann.

Suddenly, there was an explosion of gunfire, and 12-gauge shotgun slugs shattered Sheila Ann's bedroom windows, ripping her bedspread and tearing holes in the wall just above her bed. Miraculously, no one was hurt. Sheila Ann was away for the night.

A made for TV movie? No, a real-life story of terror in Hot Springs, Arkansas, as set forth in the official record of a trial against a United Steelworkers of America local in Garland County Circuit Court.

It is a story of union violence and harassment against five courageous women who defied the strike orders handed down by officials of a USW local against National Rejectors, Inc. of Hot Springs.

Even after the strike was over, the women were subjected to name calling, obscene language and threats. Glue or grease was rubbed on their chair seats at work. Supervisors had to accompany them to the bathroom for their protection.

There were repeated incidents of hair-pulling, shoving, slapping and tire-slashing. They were pursued in their cars by thugs who tried to run them off the road.

The terror might have continued for many more months if it hadn't been for the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation. The Foundation is the only publicly supported charitable institution in America organized solely to provide free legal aid to employees whose rights have been violated because of abuses resulting from compulsory unionism.

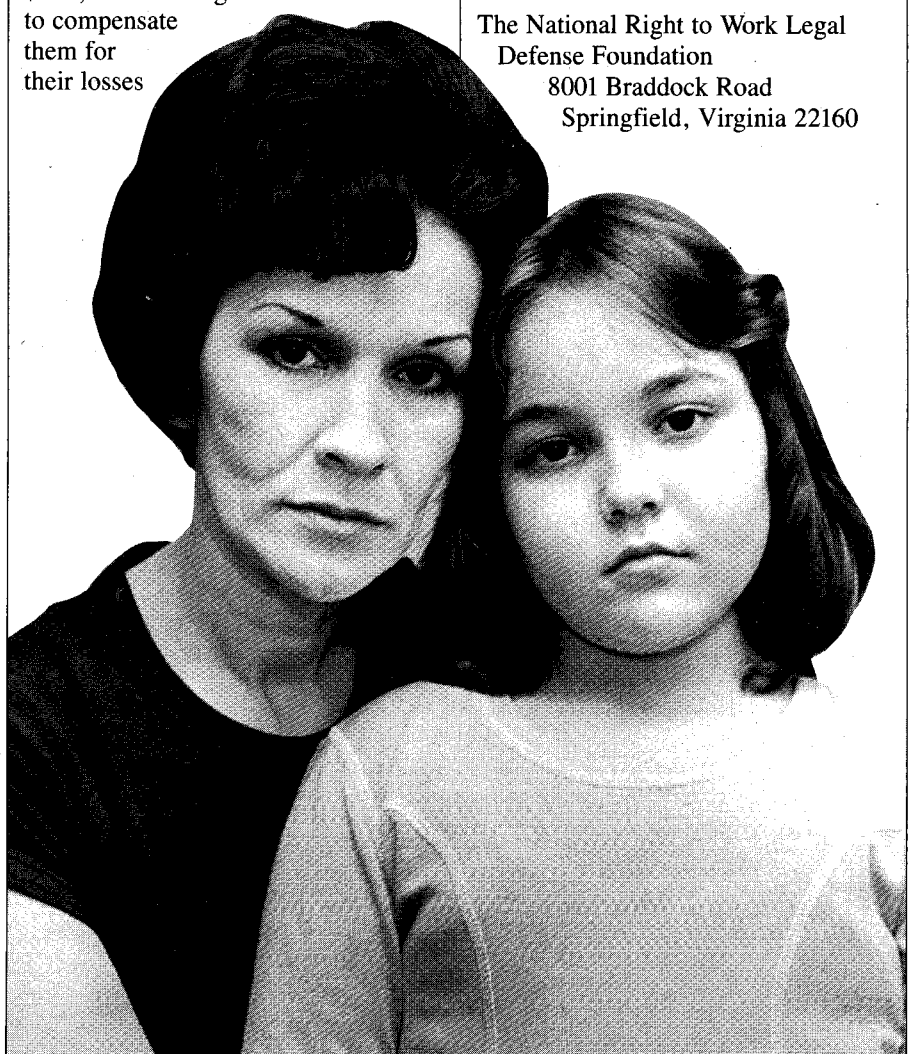
After being asked for help, Foundation attorneys immediately filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board, demanding an end to the campaign of intimidation and terror. The Board swiftly responded and the union publicly promised not to engage in such activities in the future if the NLRB agreed not to prosecute.

With the Foundation's assistance, the five women also brought suit against the union and its officers in the Arkansas state court. In May 1980, a trial court jury awarded them a total of $250,000 in damages to compensate them for their losses and suffering, and to punish the union for its lawlessness.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is currently helping American workers in more than 100 cases across the country, ranging from other union violence cases to those involving academic and political freedom and other fundamental rights. But it would like to do even more.

If you'd like to help Deanna Ussery and other workers like her, we'd like to hear from you.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation
8001 Braddock Road
Springfield, Virginia 22160



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the turnover to the Reagan administration and, in Watson's words, to make it "as constructive and smooth and effective a transition as has ever occurred."

Early preparations for it on both the Carter and Reagan sides were sensible and promising. But it predictably won't be a wholly smooth transition and, on the Carter side, it can't be a happy one. The frictions and the sorrow are government-wide, but in the American system they are most evident at the White House. Gerald Ford, his family, and his White House staff were no better prepared for his defeat in 1976 than the Carter people were in 1980. Ford publicly wept the morning after, Carter on election morning when he knew the outcome to be certain. This year, though, the blow was magnified by the dimensions of defeat in a way it had not been in 1976. The loss of the presidency by any margin would have been painful, but Ronald Reagan's popular majority of only 51 percent would have moderated the pain if that had been all. Of course it wasn't all. The stupendous electoral majority of 489 to 49 votes, Reagan's sweep of 44 states, and the totally unexpected Republican capture of the Senate shattered the Carter establishment. A Carter assistant who shared and observed the reaction in the White House offices as no reporter could was asked three days after the election whether people had begun to recover. "No," the assistant answered. "Not really, not really. There's a real sense of despair around here, a real sense of depression." That remained true, perhaps a bit less true, a full week later.

It wasn't just a personal matter of jobs about to be lost or, for Carter campaign employees, already lost. It was a matter of power lost; often more a sense of power than actual power. The lowliest secretaries and messengers in the West Wing, where a President's senior assistants work, and in the adjoining Old Executive Office Building, enjoy the sense of power when the power is there. A ranking veteran of the Ford White House compared what happens in those havens of power to the locks of a great dam. One moment the locks are full, the water pressing with unimaginable force upon the confining gates. Periodically the locks are emptied and their walls and the dam sides are bare, forming halls of nothingness. That's how it was in the West Wing corridors the morning after Ford's defeat in 1976, this assistant remembered, and friends in the Carter West Wing told him it was like that again.

For those affected the jobs problem is especially bad this year if you are going out, and the competition is rough if you hope to be coming in. Democratic losses in the Senate and House and the coming displacement of Democrats by Republicans on the Senate committee staffs, plus the coming turnouts and turnovers in executive departments and agencies, severely restrict the Washington government job market for White House Democrats. At the White House, the focus of this report, 1,833 individuals, 136 fewer than authorized, were aboard and working on November 1. Four hundred and fifteen of the 1,833, including 336 full-time employees and 79 consultants and other temporary employees—50 more of the latter than the 1981 budget authorizes because of vacancies created by assignments from the White House staff to the Carter campaign staff—were in the President's immediate White House Office. Around 350 of the 1,833 are political appointees subject to instant replacement, many more can be maneuvered out or transferred to poorer jobs with a little Republican effort, and the 350 includes about 200 of the WHO's 336 full-timers. Government-wide, if the Reaganeers intend a meat-axe cleanout, some 2,000 of 3,800 salaried presidential appointees and "schedule C" employees without Civil Service protection are vulnerable to quick dismissal.

Significant tensions and complications in this and any transition process are of greater general interest than the job agonies. John O. Marsh Jr., a Washington attorney and former Virginia Republican congressman who was President Ford's White House counselor and supervised the 1976 transition for Ford, has been appointed to the Reagan transition executive committee. According to his friend Jack Watson, Marsh has summarized some lessons from the 1976 experience in a memo to Reagan transition director Ed Meese. Watson checked out the same recollections with Marsh and indicated at a White House press briefing that a lot of shared wisdom is going into this transition.

An interesting difference between 1976 and 1980 is the difference between the Carter and Reagan preparations in 1976 and now. Carter had a transition team under Watson at work in Atlanta and later in Washington, and another team under Hamilton Jordon running the Carter election campaign. Fierce tensions erupted in the publicized and over-simplified form of personal conflict between Watson and Jordan, a conflict that Jordan won and that was wholly ended only when Jordan moved to the 1980 campaign committee and Watson succeeded him as chief of the White House staff. Reagan's transition director, Ed Meese, was a senior campaign official and went straight from the campaign staff to the transition staff. There were tensions aplenty among the Reagan campaigners, but not between the campaigners and the transitionists.

Another sort of tension was evident in 1976 and is bound to affect this year's transition. It is the inevitable tension between "ins" who have the responsibility

Staff Addition

We are pleased to welcome Anne Tyler as a contributing editor. A frequent contributor to *The New Republic* and author of eight novels, she most recently published *Morgan's Passing* (Knopf).

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without all the power to keep a government going until the new President's inauguration, and the "outs" who want to be treated as if they already were in. That, fundamentally, is why, in 1976 and this year, both sides agreed not to offer or insist upon White House office space for the incomers before January 20. Reagan teams will be moving into all departments and agencies, and some repetition of the many 1976 brushes, mostly unnoticed at the time, may be expected.

A special variant of the 1976 experience could and probably will recur this year. At the White House and elsewhere, the Ford people yearned to explain Ford policies in exhaustive detail, in the hope of persuading the Carter incomers that the policies should be retained. Some were, though you'd seldom know it from Carter White House spokesmen. The 1976 Carterites didn't want all that policy stuff; they had their own policy notions ready for implementation. They were interested mainly in the structure and mechanics of government, why things were done and organized as they were rather than in what they produced. Watson presumably had this problem in mind when he advised Carter officials throughout government to hold the volume of their advice to a minimum and concentrate upon what the incomers needed and wanted.

A more delicate and important form of tension, one that is already evident but will be carefully minimized by both sides, concerns the fiscal 1982 budget that is being prepared now and will be Carter's last. Carter has instructed budget director James T. McIntyre Jr., one of the quietest and ablest Georgians, to produce a genuine Carter policy budget and not a symbolic mishmash tailored to the many differences between Carter and Reagan budget objectives. That is the Carter-McIntyre purpose. Yet a dilemma exists and is recognized by all involved.

Just as Carter had a shot at Ford's last budget in 1977, Reagan has a shot at the one upcoming. Congressman Robert Giaimo, the outgoing House budget chairman, proposes that the two percent across-the-board budget cut promised immediately by Reagan be voted now. Reagan has publicly endorsed an immediate Democratic tax cut which Carter opposes. Should or should not the Carter budgeteers write in at least part of the huge increase in defense expenditure that Reagan advocated during the campaign and that Carter thought inflationary? More immediately, should Reagan's budget transitionists be kept informed, as Carter's insistently demanded in 1976, of every budget proposal and change as it develops during the preparatory process? Harrison Wellford, Jack Watson's overall transition deputy and McIntyre's chief budget transitionist, clashed repeatedly and vehemently in 1976 over this procedural issue with Ford's deputy budget director, Paul O'Neill. Watson and Meese between them probably will avert an open clash over it this year, but it's likely to be a lively point of difference.

John Osborne

What's cooking with gas.

The Perfect Fuel

As we near the end of the first decade of America's bondage to OPEC, the need to find a fuel (or fuels) of the future grows increasingly acute. The problems with oil are that it is expensive and likely to grow more so, and that our supplies are disturbingly susceptible to interruption. The Iran-Iraq war has dramatized the drawbacks of oil. If the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf were to be halted for any length of time, the result would be astronomical oil prices and sufficient economic disruption to throw the entire industrialized West into a depression. It is easy enough to find other sources of energy that are relatively inexpensive and abundant here at home—nuclear power, coal, and solar energy, to name the most obvious possibilities. But each has serious flaws too. Nuclear power presents the danger of catastrophic accidents, such as the one that nearly happened at Three Mile Island in 1979. Coal is dirty to burn, environmentally destructive to extract, and dangerous to mine—problems that can be solved, but not easily. Solar energy suffers from having either limited practical use (roof collectors which provide mainly space and water heating) or else extremely high costs (photovoltaic cells, whose practical uses are unlimited).

If only we had a fuel that was clean and safe, like solar power; cheap, abundant, and homegrown, like coal and nuclear power; and, as long as we're wishing, versatile like oil. If we had such a fuel, of course, we'd use it in a minute, and our energy woes would be, if not cured, at least eased considerably.

Well, the truth is that there is such a fuel, one that has been around for years. But instead of using this fuel to meet our current energy needs and provide a bridge to the fuels of the next century, the federal government has been pursuing policies that actively discourage its production and use. The fuel is natural gas. It is clean and safe, it is cheap, it is suitable for a variety of uses, and it is plentiful. It could do much to alleviate our energy crisis, if only we would let it.

Natural gas has a rags-to-riches past. During the oil boom years of the 1920s and 1930s, natural gas often was found along with or adjacent to oil deposits, but since there was no way to transport it, the gas was simply burned at the wellhead. Gas came into its own during World War II, when the need to export oil for the war effort forced the building of interstate gas pipelines to facilitate the use of gas as a substitute. In 1940 barely two trillion cubic feet of gas was sold in the US, but by 1955 the figure was up to 14 trillion cubic feet. Nowadays gas provides a full quarter of our energy needs. It is most commonly used for residential and commercial heating and assorted industrial purposes, but, contrary to some expert opinon, it can even be used to run automobiles.

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As natural gas grew in importance in the postwar years, it also engendered controversy. The prices charged by utilities and pipeline owners have been regulated by the Federal Power Commission since 1938. But not until 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled that the FPC also had the power to regulate gas producer's attempted bribe of a senator caused President Eisenhower, who had favored the bill, to veto it. controls, but a storm of controversy provoked by a gas producer's attempted bribe caused President Eisenhower, who had favored the bill, to veto it.

What usually happens when the government imposes price controls on a commodity is that it becomes scarcer as producers who can't make money at the controlled price invest elsewhere, even as consumers are stimulated to consume more of the commodity than they would at a higher, uncontrolled price. By 1968 it was clear that the FPC controls had produced precisely this result. That was the first year that total annual consumption of gas exceeded the amount of new gas found in the US. In 1971, recognizing the looming shortage, the FPC substantially raised the price producers could charge. But by then the damage had been done, and the next few years exposed it. The first shortage occurred in 1973, and severe ones struck in the winters of 1976-77 and 1977-78. In this case the effects of the controls were magnified by the absence of controls on gas sold in intrastate markets. The price in this unregulated market rose well above the controlled price, giving producers an incentive not to sell their gas in the regulated market.

MOSTLY BECAUSE of these shortages, the lingering dispute about gas price controls gathered force during and after the 1976 presidential campaign. President Ford had tried in vain to get Congress to lift price controls on natural gas, and Jimmy Carter promised, in a letter to the governor of Texas, that he would succeed where Ford had failed. Once in office, however, Carter and his energy czar, James Schlesinger, took a firm stand against the growing sentiment in Congress for decontrol, proposing instead that federal price controls be expanded to include gas sold in intrastate markets. The result was a bitter 18-month battle which finally, in October 1978, produced the Natural Gas Policy Act. It gave something to both those who favored controls and those who opposed them. The former got an extension of the existing controls to intrastate gas, and the latter got a gradual phaseout of the controls, which would expire in 1985. The bill also decontrolled the prices of certain types of hard-to-get gas, notably that found 15,000 feet or more below the earth's surface. The new law was nightmarishly complex, with more than two dozen different price categories, but it was about as good as one could have hoped for. It did the most important thing, lifting price controls, and the next most important thing, ending the absurd dichotomy between interstate and intrastate gas.

So far the NGPA has worked reasonably well. The higher prices allowed for conventional gas have stimulated a flurry of drilling and exploration. In 1976, 9,085 new wells were sunk in the US; last year there were 14,681. Another crucial matter is the ratio of new gas reserves to gas consumed. In 1979 the ratio reached an all-time low. But this year, gas experts say, the 13-year-old decline has reversed itself. In fact, some experts think the long-range prospects for finding large new domestic reserves of gas are better than those for oil. Recent drilling has led to speculation that the Overthrust Belt, a long geologic formation running through several western states, may harbor as much as 250 trillion cubic feet of gas, or more than 10 years' supply at the current consumption rate. Higher prices have also led to the reopening of old Appalachian gas fields given up years ago as uneconomical. One direction the NGPA has sent oil and gas producers is deeper, and the deeper you go, experts say, the better the odds of finding gas rather than oil.

The NGPA, however, is not entirely satisfactory. The prices are still set too low to induce sufficient conservation, because they have kept gas prices well below those of oil. Currently oil sells on the world market for about $33; the equivalent amount of gas sells for less than $16 in the US. The discrepancy is particularly glaring because of gas's many advantages over oil (it is cleaner, for example, and requires no storage expenses). "It's like selling steak at one-third the cost of hamburger," says David Foster, president of the Natural Gas Supply Association, with only a little exaggeration. It also casts doubt on the prospect of full decontrol in 1985. The bigger the gap between oil and gas prices, the more painful the removal of controls will be, since gas prices can be expected to rise to roughly the level of oil prices. Better to raise the regulated price more rapidly in the next five years (or even to lift controls immediately) than to cause one great shock in 1985. This measure would soften the impact of decontrol and also provide further incentives for production. Some experts worry that the gap between oil and gas prices is already causing producers to ignore gas and spend all their money looking for oil. Letting gas prices rise to the market level will not mean appreciably higher consumer costs, since most of the cost of supplying gas lies in the pipelines required to move it from place to place. Currently most of the nation's gas pipelines have plenty of spare capacity. Hence an increase in the number of factories, offices, and homes using natural gas could cancel out the effect of a wellhead price increase, since the huge overhead costs would be spread more widely. Most recent rate increases for natural gas can be blamed on the frequent curtailments of the last decade, which force a smaller number of gas users to pay the fixed costs. An increase in gas use, of course, is possible only with the higher production that decontrol may bring.

It's anyone's guess what the Reagan administration and a more conservative Congress will do about the

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NGPA. There surely will be an effort to revise some pricing rules, and possibly even to remove controls right away. With Republicans in control of the Senate and the defeat of key supporters of continued price regulation, such as representatives Bob Eckhardt of Texas and Andrew McGuire of New Jersey, the chances of lifting controls would be better next year than they were in 1977. But many people in the industry don't want to reopen the issue of gas price regulation. "It's not in our interest to have another bloody battle," says one gas lobbyist. "We'd prefer just to let the controls be phased out on schedule."

Past and present price controls, however, are only one of the ways the government has impeded the transition to natural gas. The most celebrated, of course, was energy secretary Schlesinger's high-handed veto of a deal between US distributors and Mexico, which would have supplied about four percent of US gas needs, on the ground that the price was too high. Eventually he backed down and accepted an even higher price, but by then the Mexicans weren't willing to supply nearly as much gas as originally promised.

Schlesinger's ill-starred intervention could be dismissed as mere bungling, but other federal policies are more calculated. Until recently, the conventional wisdom in Washington was that we were rapidly running out of gas and hence had to wean ourselves from it. (In 1977 Schlesinger said the world's gas supplies should be regarded as "gone.") Several measures intended to reduce natural gas consumption (in favor of other energy sources) were written into law. The most important is a provision of the 1978 Fuel Use Act, which forbids the construction of any new natural gas boilers by utilities or industrial firms and requires existing ones to be converted to coal by 1990. This provision made a certain amount of sense at the time, since gas appeared to be running out. Now, however, gas doesn't appear to be running out.

Kevin Rooney, a legislative aide for the Edison Electric Institute, a utility trade association, says that the prohibition on gas boilers will force one Texas utility to use oil instead. (The Fuel Use Act also was supposed to phase out the use of oil by utilities, but here the law is so weak as to be ineffectual.) It is expected to increase its annual consumption of oil from about half a million barrels a year to about 32 million. The coal industry naturally supports anything that is likely to increase the demand for coal, as restrictions on natural gas use will, but in fact the cost advantage of coal over gas is great enough that most utilities have no interest in building gas boilers anyway. For many, though, the cost of converting existing gas boilers to coal is prohibitive, so they will simply switch to oil, a much cheaper conversion. This will only stimulate the national appetite for oil, hardly a sane policy for a nation so dependent on oil that it is prepared to risk nuclear war to protect its access to the Persian Gulf.

There are signs that Congress may correct this mistake. It has already largely corrected another one, a provision in the NGPA that required the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to set higher prices for industrial users than for residential customers. This was also meant to avert a general shift to using natural gas instead of oil and coal. FERC submitted a proposal to Congress but made plain its doubts about the wisdom of the scheme. Congress obliged by vetoing the proposal. (Unfortunately an earlier plan, applying a higher rate to a much smaller class of utility and industrial users, was approved.)

PERHAPS a bigger obstacle to greater industrial use of natural gas than its price is its availability. Under federally mandated curtailment plans, which are implemented when supplies are short, utilities are required to cut off industrial users first and residential customers last. Hence industrial users have had to bear the brunt of each of the shortages in the last decade. This federal policy is just the opposite of how the government handles oil shortages. In the latter, industrial users are protected against the loss of their supplies, with the shortage borne mostly by drivers. Another reason gas users are more vulnerable to shortages is that oil is easier for users or speculators to stockpile for emergencies. Gas is more expensive to store, and price controls have prevented the type of speculation that would hoard supplies for sale during shortages—the same price controls that cause the shortages. Even new industrial users who are willing to pay a premium for gas will be cut off first, which tends to dampen the enthusiasm for gas. A recent letter from FERC blamed the curtailment plans for the sluggish industrial market for gas:

> New low-priority gas customers confront an environment where they will be the first users kicked off the gas stream during periods of excess demand. . . . An oil user is not going to jeopardize his oil supplier relationship to obtain cheaper but insecure access to gas.

The letter, signed by Walter Schroeder, director of regulatory analysis at FERC, suggested that shortages be allocated proportionately among all industrial users, rather than cutting off the newest users completely. Under this scheme, industrial and commercial users would be able to buy and sell rights to gas, thus allowing gas to go where it is most valued. But if FERC and Congress are serious about encouraging natural gas use to reduce our dependence on oil, they also should be looking at the possibility of allocating some of the shortages to residential customers. A better approach, though, would be to lift the price controls on gas, which would greatly minimize the chance of more shortages.

It is easy to expect too much of natural gas in helping us out of the existing crisis. When all possible sources of gas are considered, the amount existing on this globe is truly fantastic. By the *Wall Street Journal*'s estimate, the planet has 20 million years' worth of gas at the current rate of consumption. Numbers like this

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have led some observers to regard gas as the ultimate panacea. It is not. Most of the huge deposits of gas are much too costly to extract, even at today's energy prices. But there is plenty of natural gas for the foreseeable future, and probably beyond, as long as prices are allowed to rise to the level set by the market. There are hardly any fuels to compare with natural gas. As long as we've got it, we ought to use it.

Stephen Chapman

Labour's new leader
only looks like a left Foot.

The Pussycat

London

On that astonishing evening in 1945 when the British electorate threw out Winston Churchill and the Tory party, a jewelled dowager at a party in the Ritz was seized with incredulity. "They have elected a Labour government," she cried. "But the country will never stand for it." Reading the British or American press on Michael Foot's election as leader of the Labour party, one could be forgiven for detecting the same note of ambiguity and bafflement. Foot is held up as Cromwellian, almost a leveler. He is depicted as a revivalist demagogue, a scourge of the establishment, a man whose speeches and writing are tainted with vitriol. Let me break a rule and announce the purpose of this article. None of the above is true. You can all relax.

Michael Foot is one of the most conservative and traditional figures on the well-worn British political stage. He makes Norman Thomas look like Leon Trotsky. Personally, he is the sweetest and tamest pussycat ever to appear in Labour's litter. By his general bearing when in office he recalls Bertrand Russell's judgment on Ramsay MacDonald: "He would rather be considered a gentleman by his enemies than a comrade among his friends."

Moreover, the British parliamentary Labour party is not in the business of electing revolutionaries or subversives. It is an assemblage of superannuated trade union officials, career-minded ex-journalists, lawyers, and other "marginal elements," as we used to say in the trade. A moment's thought should have alerted pundits to this fact—Michael Foot was chosen not in spite of his age, his conservatism, and his reputation as an ex-firebrand but because of them. He is, to borrow an American term, a compromise candidate. And there is nothing that our poor, etiolated Labour party loves more than a good compromise. Now I fear we need a short digression about the erosion of British social democracy.

Having formed a highly unsuccessful administration between 1974 and 1979, based on an opportunistic pact with the trade unions, the Labour government fell apart when the unions put their members' pay before their ancestral loyalty. Mrs. Thatcher then coasted into power on an unprecedented blue-collar Tory vote—the vote of the working-class Conservatives Disraeli dubbed "our angels in marble." The Labour share of the electorate never had been lower, its active membership was increasingly geriatric (Foot himself is seven years older than the party), and its support among "the talking classes" had declined to near invisibility. These same talking classes—the academics and writers who used to play such a role in social-democratic life here—are now divided as to whether Labour is too closely identified with what they call "dogmatic leftism" or insufficiently imbued with that charismatic quality. What better candidate, then, than Michael Foot, who isn't sure either?

At its last conference in October, bitterly resentful of what it saw as magic-circle policy-making confined to members of Parliament and the Executive, the party chose a new system of king-making. From now on, all Labour members and candidates must be chosen afresh by their local parties at each election, and their records scrutinized by all those who can make it to the caucus meeting unaided. More adventurously still, the party will decide on its leader by means of an electoral college—the composition of which, typically, has yet to be decided. As the timeservers of the parliamentary party voted last week, they bore in mind their local associations and the eternal need for a quiet life. At a special conference early in the new year, Labour will try to hit upon a new selection process. Your average smart MP wants to be on the right side of whatever happens. And if anybody can fudge the issue successfully, it will be the pseudo-radical Foot rather than the abrasive right-wing Denis Healey (the nearest we have to a Daniel Patrick Moynihan). Labour loves a pastiche. (An amusing footnote here: though both men were active on the British left before the war, Denis Healey was the only one to join the Communist party. His friends say that it was an excess of youthful zeal, and his critics hold that he joined only because of Stalin and his love of power in all forms. Certainly the latter quality is abundantly on show.)

If any more background may be excused, it should be borne in mind that neoconservative Britain is a very bleak, mean, and unattractive society at the moment. Many commentators (not including your correspondent) feel that it is also very shaky and unlikely to last. They hold in evidence every business spokesman and corporate-state politician who has been near a lever of power since the war. Given the wide currency of this wiseacre analysis, it seems to many that, under our winner-take-all swing system, the next Labour leader, *ex hypothesi*, also will be the next prime minister. Ergo, there is no need to be especially fastidious about the choice, or the fashion in which it is made.

This facile and widespread opinion ignores the deep strain of masochism in the British character, which

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time after time has awarded points for austerity on the public school grounds that if it hurts, it must be doing you good. It also ignores Mrs. Thatcher's ace in the hole—the surge of oil revenue due in a year or so which will relieve much of the pressure on public spending. Britain will not be quite in the OPEC class, but it will have a good deal of spare cash on hand to alleviate recession in time for the 1984 election. In the meantime the monetarist gospel has been quietly shelved (money supply grows like Topsy around here) in favor of the more traditional use of unemployment to discipline the labor market. This has tamed the unions with surprising speed, and has restored an "upstairs, downstairs" society more rapidly than one would have believed possible. We should be feeling the real social strains—especially among the youth and the immigrants—just about the time that Michael Foot concedes defeat in the next election.

Foot's mandate is to reunify a party deeply divided in the face of a formidable Thatcherite foe. In the field of foreign affairs he also must face Labour's division over the European Common Market and the Atlantic and NATO alliances. In the past he has been an enemy of all three entanglements, preferring instead to stress the simple-minded and utopian concept of a free, sovereign, independent, and fiercely insular "merrie England." Such a pose cannot survive for long in office. Labour has tried to occupy the dead ground the Tories abandoned when they moved from empire to European integration. But nobody on the alleged "left" has faced up to the certainty of an increased dependence on the United States if such moves were made. Foot has made himself popular by appearing on chauvinist platforms against Europe in the company of Enoch Powell. But he cannot live by attitudes alone.

Again, he pledges to return American cruise missiles and Trident systems to their country of origin. But when pressed on the thorny point of dependence on the US, he replies blandly that he is against all bombs. Probe any further and you find mush, laced with traditional pacifist pieties. For those of us who fear that we live in a prewar rather than a postwar world, such flanneling is a cause of great migraine and depression; for those who insist on the "realism" of the deterrent strategy, it is mere balderdash. Thus, not for the first time, an apparently radical position angers and mobilizes the right while disappointing the left.

Like a number of other nonconformist radicals, Foot becomes more Catholic than the pope when given an atom of responsibility. Poacher-turned-gamekeeper is inadequate as a description of his hyperorthodoxy on all matters in the last Labour government. This included being privy to the inner Cabinet decision on the stationing of the cruise missiles in Britain, and the adoption of the most slavish attitude when faced with the imperatives of the international monetary fund. It is this that explains his election victory: he now has enough friends and admirers on the right as well as in the soft center. Perhaps we should not be all that surprised; after all, humankind cannot bear too much reality and it is a very cold world for socialists in Britain at the moment. Labour's collapse into sentimentality and the myth of the golden past is the exact and appropriate counterpart of the newfound ruthlessness on the part of the Tories, and the return to Britain of what Disraeli called "the two nations." The only offense would come if this parody of politics became widely advertised as radicalism. In reality, Labour has voted to stay the same. As Hilaire Belloc put it, immortalizing an earlier period:

> The accursed power that stands on privilege
> And goes with women and champagne and bridge
> Broke, and democracy resumed her reign
> Which goes with bridge and women and champagne.

Christopher Hitchens

Christopher Hitchens is on the staff of the *New Statesman* of London. Next spring he will be a visiting staff member of the *Nation* of New York.

Report of a soldier in the battle of ideas.

From the Trenches

For the last two years, I have been a foot soldier in the battle for ideas that Republicans won on November 4. I am a political pollster, and it has been my job to advise Democratic candidates on how to win elections. For the 1980 campaign, our polling firm represented more than a dozen Democratic senators and Senate candidates. Only five won. It may be some consolation that almost half of the 11 Democratic senators elected were our clients. Nevertheless, as General Joseph Stilwell put it when his troops lost control of the Burma Road: "I say we took one hell of a licking."

This year's losing Democratic Senate candidates included some of the most attractive and accomplished men and women in public life, John Culver of Iowa, Frank Church of Idaho, Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin—these and others overshadowed their opponents in terms of personal character, competence, hard work, genuine roots in their states, and committee positions. They were well known; and if the opposition succeeded in communicating negative information about them, our candidates' virtues and strengths also were well known. On the basis of character factors, they should have been reelected easily.

The problem was on the issues. Not all the issues—each of them had attractive records on issues of particular concern in their states. But on the major national issues of foreign and domestic policy, they were seen as out of line with their constituents. It was obvious early on what their opponents would do: concentrate on the major national issues and argue that Senator X

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was more in line with Washington thinking than—in a recurring phrase—Iowa/Idaho/Wisconsin thinking.

Our strategy was not so clear. Last June my boss Peter Hart and I sat down and tried to devise a single basic strategy that would work for our Democratic Senate clients. We could not come up with one. Out of the record of the last two or four years there was no clear Democratic message, no articulated Democratic vision of the future. When the Carter administration came to town in 1977, Democrats on Capitol Hill expected it to provide such a theme, as Democratic administrations had in the past. But it never did. Neither did the congressional leadership. Democrats apparently assumed that they could get reelected by using the advantages of incumbency, by emphasizing special issues for their own constituencies, and by relying on the historic attractiveness of the Democratic label. These were enough for most Democrats in 1976 and 1978. They were not enough in 1980.

Our fall campaign strategy, in effect, was to scramble. Our candidates relied on every special issue and character trait on which they had the advantage over their opponents. They made great efforts to shape the campaign dialogues in ways that would be favorable. All of them ran good, solid campaigns. But only a few of them were able to win.

Nothing suggests that 1982 or 1984 will be any different. The Democrats have many vulnerable Senate seats up in 1982, while the Republicans are vulnerable in only one, California. There is no reason to believe the Democrats running then will have any greater personal strength than the Democrats running this year. Scrambling cannot be considered a good strategy. The Democrats will have to do better if they want to win again. They will have to come up with a national message, a vision of the future, a reasonably coherent set of ideas which can help win elections and can help govern the nation.

I do not have—presto!—that national message. But I think I know what Democrats and liberals must do in the next few years to become politically competitive again. The first step is look at the nation and world we live in and see if they match our current vision of them. The second step is to begin to appreciate more our own accomplishments and to celebrate the strengths of the society we have done so much to shape.

If you listen to much Democratic oratory, you get the idea that we have a nation that is, in Franklin Roosevelt's phrase, one-third ill-clothed, ill-housed, and ill-fed. That description was accurate enough in 1936, and it was not too far off as recently as 1963, when Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America*. But it is not an accurate description of the United States today, and the voters know it. Yet Democrats place major emphasis on programs to help the poor and base their positions on other issues, such as energy, on the impact such programs have on the poor. We should not forget that there are a few pockets of poverty left in the United States. But policies based on the erroneous assumption that there is a mass of improverished Americans are not going to win majority support.

It is particularly ironic that liberals persist in believing that poverty is widespread, because the main reason it is not is that liberal programs have worked. Martin Anderson, Ronald Reagan's domestic policy adviser, wrote a book on welfare admitting that Great Society programs achieved their objective and reduced poverty to negligible proportions. Democrats seem psychologically unable to believe this. Evidently Democrats are afraid that if they admit that poverty largely has been conquered, then voters will not support the programs that have conquered it any longer. They seem afraid to make the argument—an argument I am convinced the public will accept—that these programs are good because they largely have eliminated poverty, and they should be continued to maintain that accomplishment.

For four years the Carter administration and most Democratic economists persistently have overestimated the dangers of unemployment and underestimated the dangers of inflation. Again we fail to take into account the success of our own programs, and fail to see that the impact of a given percentage of unemployment on people's lives is far different from what it was 20 or 40 years ago.

SINCE I grew up in Michigan, I can recall how the deep 1958 recession could cost working people everything they had. If they were out of work for more than a few months, they could lose their houses, their cars, and appliances; they might even have to send their children to bed hungry. In Michigan today, the unemployment rates compare with those of 1958, but the effects are different. Auto workers get 90 percent of their basic wages for 39 weeks after losing their jobs. Of course there is psychic damage in being unemployed and many workers in Michigan and Ohio must be seriously concerned about their long-range futures. But in the meantime workers have a decent income and the time to listen to radio ads telling them about jobs that are available in Houston. In our polls, we have seen unemployment consistently overshadowed by inflation as an economic problem, even in Michigan and Ohio and Pennsylvania. Democrats who act on the assumption that unemployment has the same kind of effect on people's lives as it did in the 1930s or 1950s are going to come up with policies that make no sense to voters.

There is a similar pattern on civil rights. I have heard so many liberals insist vehemently that nothing has changed since the days of segregation—that this is a country that is racist through and through, that there is only lip service to the idea of equal rights. Yet over the last 20 years there has been the most massive change in racial attitudes, in behavior by whites, and in the law that ever has been wrought peacefully in a major industrial country. Twenty years ago blacks risked their lives in most of the south if they tried to

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vote or sat on the wrong seat in a bus or tried to get a meal at a whites-only lunch counter. Many people felt that the attitudes behind such practices never could be changed. But they have been changed. Those days are gone, thanks primarily to the courageous blacks who took great risks to defy injustice and also to the white liberals (and a few conservatives) who passed laws and helped enforce them and worked to change white attitudes. Yet one still hears some liberal leaders saying that the Ku Klux Klan will march in Ronald Reagan's inaugural parade—which is either demagoguery or, worse, evidence of a terribly distorted view of the world. Certainly this country still has some way to go, but to ignore what we have accomplished is to blot out reality.

On issue after issue, Democrats' perspective seems to be stuck at some time in the past. Looking at the nation today, they seem to see the nation of 1963. The problems that they identified then and for which they devised solutions which they put into effect, still seem as bad as ever. The Republicans, who seemed in 1963 bereft of useful ideas on domestic policy, do not have a similar problem. They did not bring a perspective stuck in the past to the America of the late 1970s, and so they were able to look around and see America afresh. With their more accurate perspective, they have been able to prescribe solutions which are in line with their values and which seem to voters to speak to the problems they see today. Democrats, with their dated perspective, have not been able to compete.

If you insist on seeing the world of 1980 as if it were the world of 1963, or even of 1970, then you will miss something very important, and that is that Democrats and liberals actually have improved the situations they were complaining about then. They have gone a great way toward solving the problems they identified. We have a much more inclusive and generous welfare state than we did in 1963—too generous, in the Republicans' eyes. In foreign affairs, we are a nation much less ready than we were in 1970 to embark on foolish military adventures in the third world—the Vietnam inoculation kept us out of such places as Angola, Zaire, and, until recently at least, the Persian Gulf. We are a better nation than we used to be, thanks largely to liberals' successes. And everybody knows it—except the liberals.

So when liberals persist in seeing the United States in a perspective which is sharply critical, and which is no longer accurate, they risk being seen not as idealistic reformers but rather as anti-American cranks. The fact is that the United States has done a pretty good job of achieving the liberal goals listed earlier: our government is more democratic, our capitalist economy is actively regulated and has generally inclusive welfare state protections, basic civil liberties are secure, there have been great advances in civil rights. Our problems are different—persistent inflation, dependence on foreign oil. Much of our task over the next few years will be defending the things we have achieved against the efforts of the Republicans to modify them, although there is little reason to believe Reagan will try to dismantle the welfare state or reinstate segregation. Liberals, more than their adversaries, have shaped what America is today. It no longer makes much sense to address public issues in a tone that is unremittingly critical and negative. It is time to stop downgrading our own product.

Michael Barone

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Wanna bet?

Reagan's Price Controls

by Robert Lekachman

I now predict that by mid-1983 at the very latest, and probably a year earlier, Ronald Reagan will reverse course and seek congressional authority to freeze wages and prices for three to six months. As a patriotic American, though a card-carrying member of the immoral minority, I can even predict how this will come about. Mr. Reagan will rally his constituents to the banner of the values that made America great. To the litany of the Moral Majority—thou shalt not sneak into X-rated flicks, commit an abortion, separate a man from his handgun or prevent his child from praying in the classroom—our new president will add the moral-

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ity of stable prices and wages. Moral Americans will content themselves with this week's paycheck and prices as practical expression of the old-time religion.

A good politician quickly learns to rise above principle. Reagan need turn back the pages of political history no further than August 15, 1971, for useful instruction in this art. On that fateful Sunday, the same Richard Nixon who recalled in tones of horror his 10 months of purgatory during World War II as an attorney in the Office of Price Administration startled an incredulous universe by clamping a 90-day freeze on wages and prices, abruptly terminating gold convertibility, and imposing a 10 percent tariff surcharge on imports. His abrupt rebirth as a controller was caused by the imminence of the 1972 election and the inadequacy of other responses to inflation.

Sad to reveal, I am not privy to the deliberations of the Reagan inner circle. Although I have stayed close to the telephone and my number is listed, Ed Meese, Anne Armstrong, and Bill Casey have chosen not to call. But even without consulting the new ruling circle, I can readily foresee the scenario which reaches the melodramatic climax of Nixon redivivus.

Reagan is an honest man who, like Jimmy Carter, will try to keep his promises. In the first months of his presidency, a Congress full of reactionaries and terrorized Democrats is likely to cut taxes and empower the Pentagon to enlarge its shopping list for expensive and lethal toys. The assorted calamities of Carter economic mismanagement have left a legacy of firmly entrenched 10 percent inflation and a ridiculous set of voluntary wage-price guidelines. As Alfred Kahn, their powerless administrator, has candidly admitted, his major achievement has been the growth of a moustache. A new surge of consumer buying and military procurement in the context of a sluggish recovery are certain to shove inflation toward 15 percent or higher.

The president will urge his fellow citizens to be patient. In reassuring tones, he will echo the confidence of Arthur Laffer and Jack Kemp—that very soon the elixir of supply-side economics will unleash the energies of entrepreneurs, investors, and ordinary wage slaves. Dramatic improvements in productivity will translate into bulging inventories, price reductions, and a surge of economic growth which will resume the march toward ever higher living standards, the American birthright.

Alas for the vanity of human wishes. Lower taxes, loosened regulation, and mutual admiration between corporate types and the new administration are as likely to cure inflation and revitalize American industry as kerosene is likely to extinguish a roaring fire. American troubles, like those of other industrialized communities, stem from the disappearance of cheap and dependable sources of energy, the tightness of world grain supplies, and the complications of changing relations between the first and third worlds. The special American contribution is managerial failure in an embarrassingly long list of industries where our leadership once was taken for granted, notably autos, steel, and consumer appliances.

As inflation accelerates and productivity scarcely improves, the Fed will be more and more tempted to do its thing. Central bankers, like Isaiah Berlin's hedgehog, will know that a good, old-fashioned monetary squeeze will cure inflation. Of course, like bloodletting, the 18th-century medical treatment, monetary cold turkey leaves the patient in severely debilitated condition. But, so the theory goes, if he survives, he will be a healthier specimen.

If around Labor Day 1981 the Fed applies the brakes to monetary growth, a sharp new recession will follow quickly. As unemployment mounts and Republican promises to get America back to work are recalled bitterly even by conservative columnists, Republicans will remind their leader with increasing stridency that the midterm elections are just around the corner. The White House will privately urge the Fed to relent. Far more compliant to presidential wishes than its propaganda suggests, that body dutifully will relax the curbs on money growth. Having missed a beat or two, inflation will pick up speed as the recession ends and recovery begins. To one and all the lesson will be clear: the nation's troubles are as intractable as they ever were in the Golden Age (as by then it will be remembered) of the Carter administration. In Plains, as the retired president composes his memoirs, he will mingle a chuckle or two over his successor's dilemmas with his morning prayers for his country.

After trying supply-side economics, conservative monetary nostrum, and deregulation, President Reagan will discover that conservative economists furnish advice even more foolish than that of their opposite numbers in Democratic administrations. He will resort to his ultimate weapon. He will summon Big John Connolly, by this time secretary of defense or possibly our first civilian chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Oval Office and ask Lenin's question: What is to be done?

Seldom at a loss for a policy and even less often deterred by self-doubt in its advocacy, Big John will remind this Republican president of the glittering success of the counsel he offered to Richard Nixon at a similar juncture. Just as he had promised, the freeze and subsequent controls had led to the 1972 Republi-

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can landslide. Public memory is short. No politician becomes president without a strong streak of pragmatism—even if his rhetoric is empty of it. In the absence of available alternatives, Mr. Reagan will accept the advice of his masterful subordinate. By the end of his first term, the American economy will be more tightly managed by government than at the end of the Carter quadrennium.

Will all this really happen? Remember, you read it first in these pages.

Business is business for OPEC, though they pretend otherwise.

Love and Oil

by Douglas J. Feith

Because the United States chooses to pay for Arab oil both with dollars and with diplomatic concessions, we overpay for a commodity that already is rather expensive. The notion that oil pricing and production decisions register the oil regimes' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with US strategic and diplomatic behavior underlies, for example, the Carter administration's sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia, its proposed sale of US military turbine engines to Iraq, its "tilt" toward Iraq before and during the Iraq-Iran war, its promotion of the Saudi call for "Arab solidarity" (even at the expense of Egyptian-Israeli peace), its neglect of the US strategic petroleum reserve, its courtship of the PLO, and its decision to deal with OPEC on the basis of "cooperation rather than confrontation." Americans have come to view Washington's political concessions to Arab regimes as a mandatory surcharge for Arab oil, over and above the dollar price per barrel.

The oil sheikhs encourage their customers to adopt this non-economic view of the international oil trade. The denser OPEC's mystique, the more potent the oil producers' image; the vaguer and less businesslike their perceived motivations, the more popular the belief that the Arabs, when they produce oil for sale, are doing us a favor. Accordingly, the oil sheikhs feign desire to conserve their oil. Sheikh Yamani of Saudi Arabia confides to credulous interviewers that his country has more oil revenues than it needs, indeed, more than it wants. He pulled this shenanigan even with that usually astute journalist, Oriani Fallaci. In response to Fallaci's observation that the 1973 oil price increases resulted in a decline in Saudi sales, Yamani volunteered, "Yes, about 13 percent. And that's a good thing for us when it happens, since thereby we accumulate less money." Fallaci replied, "Right."

In the same vein, officials of the oil states pretend to resent the business their customers give them. Kuwait's UN ambassador, Abdalla Bishara, recently insisted before the UN General Assembly that his countrymen "want more conservation from the West, particularly the United States." Presumably the Kuwaitis enjoy not having the choice to enlarge their wealth by selling more oil at higher prices.

To vest all this conservation blather with additional credibility, the Saudis in 1978 proclaimed a ceiling on their oil production of 8.5 million barrels a day. The implication was that Saudi Arabia, whose existing wells could (and can) yield three or four million barrels a day more than the "ceiling" amount, wanted to forgo the extra revenues that might become available to them from production above the "ceiling." Riyadh knew that if market conditions changed enough to allow the Saudis to get their asking price for more than 8.5 million barrels a day, Riyadh could exceed its "ceiling" while claiming it was doing so for love (of the West) and not for money. Requests for political favors in return would, of course, follow.

The set-up was transparent. But no Saudi claim or request ever is so patently dishonest and ridiculous that it fails to receive endorsement from the American academics (such as Michael Hudson of Georgetown University and George Lenczowski of the University of California at Berkeley) and former officials and pols (such as George Ball, James Akins, L. Dean Brown, and James Abourezk) who serve (effectively or in fact) as the oil sheikhs' hired tongues and pens. "There's a very strong move in Saudi Arabia not to increase production at all," Akins advised the *National Journal* in March 1978 (a few months before the Saudis increased production by more than 20 percent). "In fact, there's a very strong movement to decrease production."

Though none of the Arab oil states ever has missed an opportunity to sell at its asking price as much oil as

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buyers were willing to pay for, the Arabs' self-serving conservation hype evidently impressed the US Central Intelligence Agency. In August 1979 the CIA's National Foreign Assessment Center reported that the Saudi "reluctance to produce above the present ceiling reflects several considerations":

> Strong conservationist attitudes based on limited alternatives to oil as a basis for Saudi economic development.
>
> The Saudis may be willing to expand productive capacity somewhat in order to improve their flexibility in production and to maintain a powerful role in OPEC. [Note: nowhere does the report suggest that Riyadh may increase production in order to make more money.] Riyadh considers a prosperous world economy to be in Saudi Arabia's interest and does not want to cause major disruptions. On the other hand, the Saudis believe that the consuming countries must learn to conserve. . . .
>
> In *Kuwait* and *Abu Dhabi*, production policy is essentially aimed at conserving resources. . . .

Let's get a few things straight about conservation. The term makes sense when applied to things of beauty—like the California redwood trees or Rembrandt's paintings; forms of life revered as such—that is, endangered species; and items necessary in the event of national emergency that may be unavailable for import when needed. Saudi prince Saud's use of the term "perishable natural resource" for oil brings to mind the possible extinction of the sperm whale. But OPEC oil, beyond the negligible amounts required for military purposes by the oil regimes themselves, has value only because it is a form of wealth that can be converted into other forms of wealth. Since oil reserves are not redwoods, Rembrandts, or whales, they should be (and, by the Arabs, are) thought of in the way a merchant thinks of his inventory.

A monopolist adjusts his output to maximize revenues. Because his goal is not the highest price but the greatest revenues, too little production can prove as costly a mistake as too much. Since Saudi Arabia sells more oil than any other OPEC country, it stands to lose the most if the cartel breaks up and competition deprives the oil exporters of "extra" monopoly profits. The problem inherent in being OPEC's largest producer is that the Saudis are expected to cut their output when there is more oil on the market than can be sold at prevailing prices.

Once the oil exporting countries have decided how many barrels they want to offer for sale and have announced their asking prices, neither the Saudis nor all the oil producers combined can control whether there will be enough demand to clear the market, i.e., to allow the exporters to sell all the oil they have produced. Considerations of market psychology—that is, the OPEC mystique—militate powerfully against cartel members' reducing their nominal oil prices. Consequently, insufficient demand creates powerful pressure on the cartel's chief output adjuster, Saudi Arabia, to reduce its production. In an attempt to avert or minimize such pressure, Riyadh urges its fellow OPEC members not to set prices so high that only a Saudi cutback can sustain them. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia has been willing to produce below capacity so long as its revenues at a given production level remain greater than they would be if Riyadh abandoned the cartel and forced other oil states to compete for customers. That the Saudis do not wish to produce more oil than the amount that will maximize their wealth does not mean that they wish to "conserve" their oil.

Elementary as it may sound, it is worth noting that the oil states unfailingly strive to make more money when the market allows. This point begs to be made not only because Sheikh Yamani occasionally lies about it, but because newspaper accounts of the oil states' policy decisions obscure it. The general press consistently reports that such decisions arise from the oil states' desire "to tame the market," to avert "sudden lurches followed by painful periods of economic readjustment," "to unify prices," "to help reduce the current glut of oil on the world market," or to perform some other regulatory mission. Phrases of this sort (all of which appeared during the last year in the *Washington Post*) are not always flatly inaccurate, but they have the effect, day after day, of leading readers to an incorrect view of the oil sheikhs, a view that fosters (undeserved) gratitude for the sheikhs' "goodwill." The sheikhs' actual role in the world oil market is akin to that of run-of-the-mill monopolists (or oligopolists). It is misleading to portray the sheikhs as disinterested supervisors of the oil trade—counterparts, as it were, of our Securities and Exchange Commission officials, whose ultimate loyalty is to the market and not to their own pocketbooks. History shows that if "lurches," "untame" markets, and "pain" can serve to enrich the oil states, those states will not hesitate to inflict them on the oil-importing nations.

THE ARAB oil regimes evidently understand the foolishness of trying to manipulate oil prices or production levels as a means of punishing or rewarding their customers' political actions. Price and production decisions are wholly ill suited to serve as diplomatic tools. Their effects are too diffuse; they cannot be used to punish enemies while sparing friends. (Due, however, to ignorance and gullibility in the oil-importing world, the threat to manipulate prices and production levels has proven eminently effective as a diplomatic weapon.) The suggestion that the Arab oil states are willing, for political reasons, to cut production and thus garner less revenue has no historical basis. In the words of MIT economist M. A. Adelman:

> We have been treated to a vast serving of nonsense about the wealthier Arab nations 'not needing the money,' hence ready or even wishing to cut output, unless our negotiators flatter and cajole and persuade them to raise output. . . . These nations aim at a price-quantity combination which maximizes profit. Nobody need question the sincerity of Arab rulers' devotion to the Arab cause, but anybody may act for two motives, when both point the same way. The Spanish conquistador

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explained why he came to the New World: 'to serve God, and get rich.'

The recent past illustrates with damning clarity the cynicism of Arab oil politics and the wastefulness of Western sycophancy. The Iranian revolution in late 1978 cut off Iran's delivery to the world oil market of four to five million barrels a day. The resulting pandemonium represented a doubly profitable opportunity for the other OPEC countries. First of all, it made oil customers so fearful about the future availability of supplies that they bid up spot market oil prices to previously unknown heights. This invited increases in OPEC contract prices. OPEC accepted the invitation with a vengeance by effecting in March 1979 an immediate 40 percent price hike, and wound up doubling oil prices by the year's end.

SECONDLY, IRAN'S fellow OPEC members jumped at the chance to grab the customers Iran had left in the lurch. (This should have taught everyone a lesson about the oil states' desire to "conserve.") In fact, those oil states with unused production capacity were so eager to expand their markets that fears developed within OPEC of a supply glut, despite the loss of Iran's production. To quiet those OPEC fears and to aggravate dread among OPEC's customers, Saudi Arabia, which had reacted hastily to Iran's misfortune by increasing Saudi production to around 10.5 million barrels a day in November and December 1978, reduced its output on January 20, 1979, right in the thick of the crisis, by a whopping two million barrels a day. Once this reduction had sowed price-boosting panic among spot-market customers, the Saudis positioned themselves to take advantage of the new higher prices by increasing their production again in February 1979 to 9.5 million barrels a day.

A few days later, in March, OPEC convened an emergency meeting at which it was agreed that the drive by some members to produce more oil and grab additional sales was reducing unduly the upward pressure on prices generated by predictions of inadequate supply. In support of the cartel's tight-supply strategy, Saudi Arabia cut oil production once again in April by one million barrels a day. For the delicious and cost-free fun of it, murmurings issued from Riyadh that the April cutback aimed to demonstrate the Saudis' disapproval of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty signed a few weeks earlier, in March. (No one had had the nerve to suggest a link between the Saudis' February production increase and the Egypt-Israel negotiations.)

The tight-supply strategy bore fruit in June 1979, when spot-market prices were bid up to their highest level ever. Saudi Arabia then upped its output to 9.5 million barrels a day in July. (All these businesslike, revenue-maximizing adjustments of output levels evidence the seriousness with which the Saudis take their 8.5 million barrel a day "ceiling.") Saudi prince Fahd announced that the July production hike of one million barrels a day was a "birthday gift" to the US. Who says Wahabi Moslems have no sense of humor?

The prince's condescension was surpassed in turn by President Carter's spaniel reply:

> WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT, JULY 9, 1979
>
> The President has received a personal commitment from Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia to increase substantially crude oil production for a significant and specific period of time. . . .
>
> The personal message to the President made clear that the Saudi decision is based on their historic friendly relationship with the United States and their commitment to be a dependable supplier of oil to the world.
>
> *The President has expressed the appreciation of the American people for this decision.* [My italics.]

OPEC's 1979 doubling of oil prices overshot the mark. Largely as a result of the high prices, demand for oil throughout the oil-importing world shrank substantially. By the summer of 1980 it became clear that demand at existing prices was not sufficient to allow the oil producers to sell all they were producing. OPEC faced a choice: one or more of its members would have to subject themselves to a production cut, or those members unable to sell all the oil they were producing would have to lower their prices.

Saudi Arabia, prudently having set its price below that of the other producers, was having no difficulty selling the full amount of its production. It called, therefore, on its fellows in OPEC to eliminate the supply glut by agreeing to accept lower prices. In reply, those fellows insisted that they had more pressing cash needs than Saudi Arabia; they would not acquiesce in a price reduction unless Saudi Arabia agreed to share in the loss of revenues; and to avert all-out price warfare that could destroy OPEC, Saudi Arabia had to lower its output. With tension high among its members, OPEC scheduled a special meeting in Vienna for September 1980.

In preparation, Riyadh adopted a two-pronged strategy. To preempt demands at the meeting for large Saudi production cutbacks, Sheikh Yamani announced in August that his country intended to maintain its current production level (9.5 million barrels a day) at least through 1980. At the same time, however, an "unnamed senior Saudi government official" leaked to various oil industry journals threats that "the United States and other industrial nations are risking a sharp cutback in Arab oil shipments unless they bring more pressure upon Israel to give up its claim to East Jerusalem." *Petroleum Intelligence Weekly* dutifully passed on the threats and added that they "ring ominously in the ears of the consumer nations." The *Washington Post* chose to enhance the credibility of the threats by observing that they "are being taken seriously by experts in the United States." The *Post* gave space to the following profundity from one such "expert": "I just don't know how to take it. It can't be ignored."

In covering the September OPEC meeting, neither the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Star*, nor the *Wall Street Journal* informed its readers of

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the precise nature of the conflict between the Saudis and the other oil producers. Instead, each paper, every day of the Vienna meeting, reported that the fight centered on the Saudis' insistence on "price unity." Nowhere was it explained why the Saudis gave a hoot about "price unity." In fact, they didn't, so long as no one was selling below the Saudi price and they would not be forced to sacrifice their own oil revenues in order to uphold someone else's higher prices.

The failure to probe the Saudis' interest in "price unity" is less puzzling than the suggestion, made repeatedly in the press, that "price unity" and general harmony within OPEC somehow serve American interests. Given that cartel prices always will exceed the prices that would exist if the oil states competed freely with each other (why, otherwise, would there be a cartel?), the United States has no interest in encouraging cooperation, and thus easy coordination, among those states. On the contrary, the US interest lies in rivalry among the oil exporters. Rather than foster OPEC's speaking with one voice, the United States should facilitate and encourage "cheating" (that is, competitive price cutting) by OPEC countries. For starters, Washington should trash those of its Middle East policies that aim primarily at promoting "Arab solidarity." For the United States, "Arab solidarity" translates only into higher oil prices.

In Vienna the Saudis chose, by harping on the phrase "price unity," to cloud the real stakes in the OPEC quarrel. Doing so allowed them to pretend that they were quite selflessly championing the cause of lower oil prices for countries, like the United States, from whom they desire political gifts. As always, the ruse worked.

On September 17 Saudi Arabia raised its oil price two dollars per barrel, a move that kept Saudi crude less expensive than other crude while reducing the amount by which the Saudis are underselling other producers. The *New York Times* did not mention the monetary rewards the Saudis will reap from the price rise. Instead, it highlighted the empty comment of a Saudi official that the price was increased so OPEC could "reach a unified price." The story continued:

> Saudi Arabia, which over the last year has repeatedly insisted that oil prices must be reduced, appeared to have been convinced that it was necessary to take the action [to raise its price] in return for a pledge by other OPEC members that their prices would be lowered eventually.

Doesn't that just make you want to give the Saudis Jerusalem—or an F-15?

The OPEC meeting ended in mid-September without an agreement solving the excessive supply/excessive price problem. With the Saudis hanging tough, Libya, Bahrain, and Algeria all felt compelled within a week of the meeting's conclusion to announce production cuts. At prevailing prices, there simply were not enough buyers in the oil market. Talk of conservation abounded upon the announcement of the cuts.

OPEC's reluctant bullet-biters found relief, however, when bullets began to fly between the Butcher of Baghdad's legions and the minions of the Holy Man of Qom. The Iraq-Iran war broke out in full force on September 23. By September 26 the press reported that all plans for output cuts by OPEC countries had been canceled. Excitement grew among the non-combatant oil producers at the prospect of snatching up markets formerly served by Iraq and Iran. By October 12, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia were reported planning to increase their oil production. (And Saudi threats of punitive production cuts relating to Jerusalem faded into silence as soon as the opportunity to sell more oil arose.) As always, the press suggested that these countries, especially Saudi Arabia, were acting out of a sense of responsibility and friendship, rather than out of desire for more money. The *Washington Post* swelled with gratitude, gushing in an editorial that the Saudi production hike was "marvelously helpful." The *New York Times* joined in the rapture. In its report on Washington's decision to grant a Saudi request for US military reconnaissance of the Iraq-Iran war, the *Times* ventured: "The United States' prompt response is thought to have bolstered its prestige in Saudi Arabia. It is possible that the Saudis would not have agreed to increase their oil production had the United States spurned their appeal." The Saudis must have rolled in the aisles when they read that.

IF YOU REMAIN skeptical of this analysis, mark well the following observations and prediction: because of the Iraq-Iran war, the world oil market is no longer "glutted"—that is, at current prices there no longer is more supply than demand. There is now a "surplus" of demand. Those OPEC countries still producing oil will capitalize on this "surplus" by selling more oil, raising prices, or both. But a few months or a year down the road, Iraq and Iran, having ended their war, will start producing oil again and, desperate for cash, will seek customers. The Saudis and the other large OPEC producers will have to suffer output reductions to allow the Iraqis and Iranians back into the market, lest Baghdad and Tehran elbow their way back in by means of cartel-threatening price cuts. When that time comes, newspapers will begin to fill with the dark remonstrations of Saudis angry about something Israel will have done—housed a Jew on the West Bank, retaliated against a PLO base, or whatever. The press will quote Saudi officials to the effect that Riyadh is planning to reduce output in order to punish Americans for their ties to Israel. State Department officials will express concern. George Ball will explain that the "moderate" Saudis need to threaten the United States in order to placate "radical" elements in the Arab world. Foolish friends of Israel will declare that Washington should not trade Jewish blood for Arab oil (as if one really could do so if one wanted to). And so Uncle Sam once again will get caught up in Riyadh's grand Arab scam.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Domestic Troubles

The risk in writing about the trouble with American films is that something may come along next week to brighten the gloom. Well, it's a welcome risk. And even if something good comes along, I can't quite believe, for reasons below, that the gloom would stay lifted.

The poor state of our films is being talked about by everyone. ("Everyone" means the people I meet.) So I've looked back just at 1980, since there had to be a cutoff date, 10 months in which I reviewed exactly 50 US pictures, many fewer than I saw, and I've come up feeling sad. Beneath the buzz of movie puffery, from both producers and press, beneath the torrential success of a few gigantic hits, it's been a drab time. Pickings can of course be slim in any 10-month period in any art, but I remember the past and there seem to be some factors that will affect the future. Here they are.

1. *Money.* Not only inflation but rising relative costs. Last week I mentioned a studio chief who said recently that a US picture must now gross $40 million at the box office to *break even*. His figure has been attacked as including padded overhead and leakages. All right, reduce it 25 percent, which seems too much. US films would then have all the freedom of spirit and artistic adventure that a mere $30 million nut allows.

I suggested last week a possible palliative, the means used in almost every other filmmaking country, government subsidy; and I'd like to examine it a bit further. The methods are usually direct grant or tax remissions or substantial prizes for work which is judged worthy by a professional jury and which has failed, after a year or so, to earn back costs. But the practicality of those ideas, I have to admit, is dim here. The size of US film budgets, as compared to foreign ones, is so much greater that grants, to be really helpful, would stun Congress; because of that size and the larger spread of both film and government, the angles for corruption would be increased. Moreover, the fact that some people *can* reap immense fortunes out of film makes loss on a film—unlike loss on opera or ballet, where profit is impossible—seem like ineptness.

Ideally, subsidy would help. Ideally, subsidy is logical. But the real chances of lowering that $40, or $30, million threshold by subsidy, with big enough money to matter, seems nebulous.

2. *Intrinsic artistic problems.* If costs were lowered, these problems would persist.

Not too simplistically, the history of US film can be divided into three periods. First, the beginnings until about 1967, when the mass of Hollywood pictures, with shining exceptions, was entertainment and when that entertainment, at its best, was the best in the world. Second, post 1967 for about seven or eight years, when, under the influence of fine foreign films imported during the preceding decade and immediately spurred by the effect of *Blow-Up* and *The Graduate*, American film moved to respond directly to American life, to develop—within the still abundant entertainment flood—a strain of "personal" work. Third, the years since then. A lot of the "personal" work in Period Two was no more than well intentioned: the pictures were not only poor, they lost money. Hollywood treated the "personal" film, which included the so-called youth film, as one more trend, like disaster pictures, and rushed out loads of junk whose only difference from other junk was its sincerity. The backlash came in Period Three. Some of the trappings of Two have been retained, like sexual frankness, like exploitative trips through social problems, like sophisticated cinema syntax, but reliable old-fashioned scripts have been slipped under the mod décor. (*Urban Cowboy*, for instance.)

Nowadays Hollywood seems to be saying, "OK, we gave those highminded types their chance, and they blew it. So we'll keep the mod décor because we paid for it, plenty, and because it helps us to stay a step ahead of TV; but we'll use it on proven stuff."

3. *Impulse.* A good work of art begins with the fact that someone *wants* to make it—out of himself. Put that thunderingly obvious fact next to the US film situation where almost no one seems to have such an impulse, where everyone seems to be scurrying for a gimmick, a hot topic, or a best seller to adapt.

Art, in one aspect at least, is the transformation of experience through perception and imagination. The best films of the past exemplify that process; and the process seems to be continuing pretty well in some other American arts: dance, poetry, painting, even—though less than bruited—in fiction. But it's not happening much in film.

The filmmaker, under which tag I subsume director and writer and participating producer, doesn't seem to have much interest in that process. If he or she shows impulse at the start, shows interest in the process (Claudia Weill with *Girlfriends*), the industry washes him or her into the varnished-trash trade (Claudia Weill with *It's My Turn*). Or impulse, if it was at all visible initially, is from the beginning grafted with Movieland cleverness (Martin Scorsese, Paul Schrader). Either way, and other ways too, the filmmaker ends up as gimmick hunter.

4. *Lack of nourishment.* Compare our situa-

Films Worth Seeing

Airplane! See accompanying article.

Every Man for Himself. Thank goodness, Godard is back to puzzle, irritate, stimulate. A sort of triangle story is the medium for this present exploration.

Kagemusha. A genius, Akira Kurosawa, near the top of his form. War in 16th-century Japan as Homer might have treated it if he had been a modern filmmaker.

Resurrection. Excellent acting in a saggy script about a woman with healing power. As her grandmother, Eva Le Gallienne, at 80, is superb.

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tion with that in some foreign countries—including their playwrights who, I'll show, are relevant. In several countries, notably Britain and West Germany, playwriting thrives. A strong element in this foreign strength is political urgency of one kind or another, though not always: the best of them all, Peter Handke, is apolitical, "merely" aesthetically vigorous. In several foreign countries, West Germany outstandingly, some good film work goes on, nourished similarly.

It would seem that the American difference, leaving money aside, is in this cultural nourishment. Political vigor in art is difficult in a country that has no politics, that equates election campaigns with politics. Aesthetic vigor in theater and film falters for different but linked antecedent reasons. Abroad the theater has always been one of the several forms prized by the most serious writers (Goethe, Hugo, Chekhov, etc.). In this country, we can infer that, until well into this century, a writer felt he was faced with a choice: between really serious writing or playwriting. This still puts the serious playwright in the implicit position of fighting for legitimacy, sensing that (in Eliot's terms) his individual talent doesn't fit into a tradition, as do the talents of American painters and poets. This can, possibly unconsciously, create a demoralizing situation for playwrights who show talent, and it may be one of the reasons why so many of them dribble away into silence or into film and TV job-hunting. Harold Clurman said, "America is lousy with talent," which I take to be his pungent version of Scott Fitzgerald's remark that in American lives there are no second acts. This century hasn't done much to foster a nourishing tradition for our playwrights. Despite all the conferences and college courses, that tradition is yet to thrive.

This lack of a strong artistic tradition in the US theater affected US film from the outset. When film began in Sweden or France or Germany or Italy, most of the work was of course pop, good or bad, but apparently some small proportion of people, in the profession and the public, wanted a small proportion of film work to reflect and extend their highly developed theatrical art. There was no equivalent pressure in the US because there was no equivalent theatrical art: so virtually *all* our films were pop right from the start. Those films had, still have, tremendous influence abroad; the converse influence of foreign filmmakers is demonstrable—I've demonstrated it elsewhere—but it's neither equivalent nor basic. It couldn't be, because of the differences in cultural history. So the newer country has had no rivulet of serious film flowing along near its flood of entertainment. And the American filmmaker, of possible serious intentions, is generally unsustained, is more or less on his own; and his own is not often enough. (I'm ignoring hundreds of serious American filmmakers who work in documentary or animation or non-theatrical forms: they are not my subject.)

The financial crunch has exacerbated all these matters.

On the other hand—and I'm glad to say there is another hand—two points. First, history doesn't give us the right to expect a predominance of good work at any time in any art. The rich periods in any art are the exceptions, and even during the rich periods, most of the work is lean. (Thousands of hack operas were written in Italy during the lifetimes of Bellini and Verdi.) Still, no one is asking for Eden, just for sustenance.

Second, occasional good films do appear even now in the time of the crunch. I can't write off as zero a year that saw *The Outsider* and *Airplane!* In the former, an American director named Tony Luraschi won through to make a film about an American in the current Irish troubles, a picture that, barring its brief prologue and epilogue, is authentic and alive. In the latter, three young men named Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, and Jerry Zucker won through to make a satire of unflagging effervescence, full of not-too-good-natured ridicule. (*Airplane!* was especially refreshing because the year was littered with inane or compromised attempts in the same vein.)

These days the most inspiriting event in any art anywhere is the appearance of a good new film. Which is another way of saying that the odds against good work are greater in film than in other arts. But it does appear, even—despite the handicaps I've cited—in the US. Two respectable pictures in a year can keep hope alive. On the other hand (again!) real hope only makes one intolerant and impatient.

The Culture Watch

Trashing the Endowments

by Robert Brustein

In *The Ministry of Culture* (Wyndham Books), Michael Macdonald Mooney reaches out to grab a greased pig and then lets the squealing animal slip from his outstretched arms. Equipped with all the paraphernalia of a muckraking classic and based on three years of investigation and research (it grew out of an article in *Harper's* magazine, where the author is an associate editor), the book is designed to be a scathing indictment of two important government agencies—the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. But for all the potential interest of the subject and the investigative labors of the author, *The Ministry of Culture* emerges as a curious performance, more significant for what it tells us about the current atmosphere of political disaffection than for what it tells us about the endowments. Frankly, the book depressed me; its interpretations proceed from such bizarre and disheartening convictions about the function of government.

These convictions are colored by strong ideological assumptions—difficult to characterize because they vacillate so wildly. On the surface, Mooney appears to be a First Amendment liberal, but the peculiar thing is how quickly his opinions shade off into right-wing libertarianism. The one constant in his politics is a ferocious hatred of anything collective, institutional, or organized—a cranky individualism closer to the mindless posturing of Ayn Rand than to the unaffiliated revolt of Ibsen. It is the author's remarkable conclusion that the twin endowments—founded to support the creative and intellectual activities of artists and humanists—are part of a monstrous

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conspiracy to impose a totalitarian structure on the United States. For Mr. Mooney, the very existence of these endowments represents a direct violation of the constitutional guarantees separating church and state—a charge he justifies by identifying humanism as a sinister form of secular theology and the "mere coordination of programs to support national culture [as] a *de facto* establishment of a state religion." In other words, the Ministry of Culture is actually a Ministry of Propaganda, formed to perpetuate what he calls "The New Order" by gaining control over people's minds. (He just stops short of claiming it will destroy the purity of our bodily essences—perhaps because this already has been done through fluoridation of the water supply.

I do not think I am overstating Mr. Mooney's rather overheated case. For him, 1984 has arrived four years early, an event he trumpets with generous epigraphs from Orwell's book, when he is not appealing to Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here*. Most of the author's references, in fact, not to mention his imagery, are from real and fictional forms of fascist states. The coming totalitarianism, for example, will be brought about through "ceremonies of power" proposed by humanists as their "identifiable means to rule in this world by an anointed elite"—ceremonies he compares to "similar metaphysical ravings by a Hitler for a 'Thousand Year Reich.' " As for the arts endowment, Mooney perceives in its "Works of Art in Public Places" program "no better summary of the radical social and political theories of the Italian syndicalists. . . . The New Order's ambitions were to create a state which was in itself a work of art . . . to carry forward the ideology of national cultural policy, first institutionalized by Mussolini." Bubbles start forming around Mr. Mooney's mouth at the mere mention of the endowments. For him, they signal the coming of a growing repression which inevitably will culminate in the gagging of every individual voice in America.

> The rule [of censorship practiced by the US government] was invariable. . . . It included every similar despotism remembered in history as disgraceful, including Nero's Rome, Spain's Inquisition, Mussolini's Italy, Stalin's Russia, and the regime of the Nazis tried for their collective crimes at Nuremburg.

I imagine it may surprise the poor, hard-working functionaries of the endowments to learn that they not only have been participating in a new national despotism but actually have been advancing it. They no doubt would be equally surprised to learn that their conspiratorial involvement in "the New Order" is proven by the silence they have maintained about other issues that arouse Mr. Mooney. Pausing for a moment in his indictment of the endowments, the author challenges the National Science Foundation, and reports on such recent events as the Three Mile Island episode and the attempt to suppress Howard Morland's *Progressive* magazine article on the secrets of the H-bomb. If you start to wonder what such discussions are doing in a volume about federal subsidization of the arts and humanities, you learn soon enough that they constitute further evidence of the complicity of the endowments in governmental chicanery: "Throughout the prosecution of the *Progressive*," Moore writes indignantly,

> and throughout the revelations provided by national authorities on Three Mile Island, the White House Ministry of Culture and its constituent subministries . . . were examples of quietism.

The "Ministry" was also silent, according to Mr. Mooney, on the subject of President Carter's energy policy, and on his proposal for an Energy Mobilization Board—"these extraordinary and radical claims for power by the New Order." Not only are Liv Biddle and Joe Duffey consolidating the extraordinary powers of their own offices but they are failing to check the tyranny invading the halls of Congress with the passage of every new bill.

Clearly, Mooney is incapable of distinguishing among the functions of the various government agencies, probably because he hates them all equally. His belligerence extends to all organized institutions, including those arts groups and universities that have benefited from federal funds. He seems to believe, for example, that symphony orchestras are inherently corrupt, and that (like the BBC, which he describes as "the propaganda agency for what remained of the British Empire") the Public Broadcasting System is merely an official government mouthpiece. It takes a little time to realize that buried underneath this overkill of institutions is a spirited defense of individual expression, and that it is not so much federal subsidy to the arts and humanities he opposes as the failure to provide sufficient money to unaffiliated artists and intellectuals. This, at least, is a coherent argument, though to advance it Mooney has to question the motives and values of anyone associated with institutions. The author correctly notes that certain artists, being unruly and controversial, are viewed with suspicion by officialdom, but at the same time that he is defending the unorthodoxies of art, he is criticizing the New York State Foundation for making grants to organizations that have incomplete applications or bad accounting procedures. Then the evidence he offers to prove that really gifted individuals are passed over by the endowment is that among those excluded from literature and humanities grants by NEA and NEH for being insufficiently creative or scholarly were Betty Friedan and Shana Alexander. Similarly, he is angered by the fact that, although *Paris Review* and *Partisan Review* are considered to be literature,

> a poet such as Rod McKuen would not be invited to the White House reception to celebrate national poetry, because McKuen's poetry sold millions of copies.

The most serious deficiency in Mooney's analysis, then, aside from his bizarre political perspective, is any understanding whatever of what constitutes art or the humanities. It is senseless to second-guess the judgments of the panels or to criticize endowment procedures if you have no convincing aesthetic or humanistic values of your own. All that results is a vague resentment against government power and critical standards. Mr. Mooney loses credibility altogether when he argues that financial contributions make no real difference to the institutions that receive them. "No matter what the patrons of dance told each other at intermission," he writes in a typically obtuse statement, "the coins they showered on the stage for the performance had no effect upon a dancer's feet." He is equally insensitive to the effect on artists of continual fundraising—pressures which may have been responsible for Alvin Ailey's recent breakdown—when he approvingly quotes the remark of one patron that the rich community might give more "if they didn't feel they were being treated nice-nice by

Coming:

John Canaday on the Season's Art Books.

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condescending artists."

What makes all this so disappointing is that the endowments, ripe as they are for satire and exposure, escape almost scot-free from the strictures of Mooney's hysterical charges. Still, the book is not entirely devoid of cogent insights. The author is informative about the influence of the corporate world on government bureaucracies, and he has some fun with Joan Mondale's clubwoman approach to her job as council chairman (quoting her as saying, "We must reject the imperialist aristocracies of Academe," an insight worthy of the author himself). He makes a convincing case for charges of corruption in the literature section of NEA, and he is illuminating in tracing the labyrinthine ways of the Federal Council, which is now coordinating more than 300 cultural programs. But because of his own ignorance about what constitutes genuine creative and intellectual labor, he is unable to confront the endowments in the area where they are most vulnerable—their failure to define a national policy on the arts and humanities that might help people like him understand the importance of such elusive things.

What finally disheartened me most about this curious book is the way Mooney advances Antigone's case without understanding the defense of Creon. By seeing a melodrama of corruption, control, and censorship everywhere—by assuming that any form of public deliberation is preparation for the totalitarian future—Mooney neglects to mention that federal support of culture came about because private philanthropy had ceased to do its job properly, and that the only alternative to government subsidy is the total annihilation of the non-profit sector, either through absorption into commercial activities or by shutting down entirely (both are happening anyway because federal funds are so inadequate). There are real dangers to political involvement in the arts, some of which the author examines. But his analysis is obscured by a cynical suspiciousness of all government activities, if not of government itself. This suspiciousness, I fear, he shares with many American citizens at present. The most significant aspect of *The Ministry of Culture*, then, is not what it reveals about the endowments, but what it inadvertently tells us about our benighted times—specifically that the "paranoid style" once perceived by Richard Hofstadter to be infecting the disenfranchised political right now seems to have spread its poisons into the entire body politic.

Sweet Democratic Despot

Walt Whitman: A Life
by Justin Kaplan

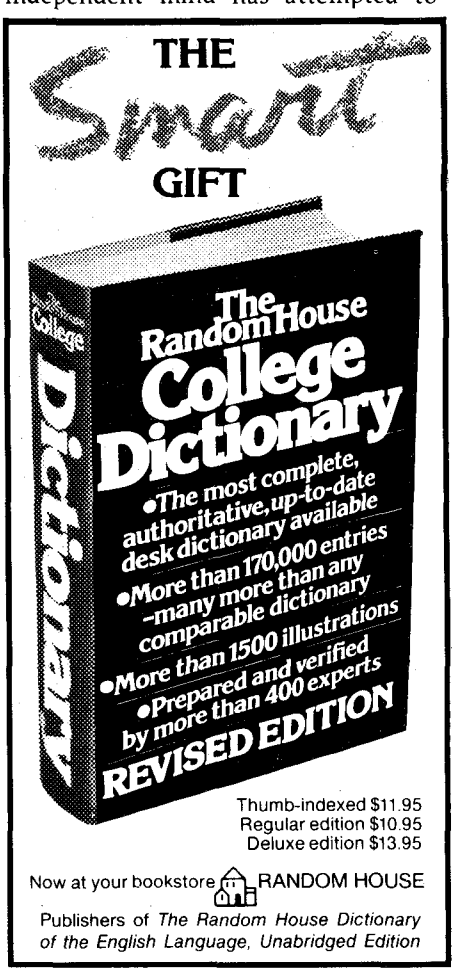
(Simon and Schuster; $15)

Only within the last 30 years has Whitman been acknowledged as our national poet, a fact that might startle the young who find him so snugly ensconced in the anthologies. We had long been nudged from abroad. It was almost 100 years ago that Victoria's poet laureate, Tennyson, wrote Whitman cordially urging him to visit the mother country, yet the poet's position at home was undefined and insecure. It remained so, despite the recognition of a few distinguished Americans, until the 1940s and 1950s when F. O. Matthiessen's high estimation in *American Renaissance* was supplemented by a number of centennial appreciations of *Leaves of Grass* (first published in 1855), notably an essay by Randall Jarrell, a book by Richard Chase, and the essays of a number of "new critics."

This highbrow acceptance of a notorious maverick didn't settle the question of his representativeness as an American. In the 19th century Europeans had called Whitman the bard of democracy as much because he said he was and they badly needed a handle to characterize us as because they had caught his cadences and sensed his powers. Whitman remained open to appropriation by interested groups, and does to this day. The Marxists used him as a forerunner in the 1940s; he has lately been employed as one by the women's movement; and a recent book, colored by sexual politics, calls him the very first "self-conscious" homosexual. As for the new critics of the 1950s, they were handicapped in dealing with Whitman. They saw works of art as standing free of their makers. Whitman's insistence that his book was inseparable from him—and that he possessed the continent in the only way that counted, that is, imaginatively—made no sense to them. What now seems the most important question is whether Whitman is simply the central figure in our poetic tradition, or has a cultural significance that makes him a representative American.

During the 1950s and 1960s much valuable scholarly spadework was done for us by foreigners—Schyberg, a Dane, and Asselineau, a Frenchman, who sorted out the relation of each of the nine editions of *Leaves of Grass* (there were many changes, additions, or deletions) to the phases of the poet's life. Gay Wilson Allen's inclusive and carefully assembled biography, Whitman's own letters, and a scrupulously edited edition of his works were published by New York University Press. Whitman had arrived, but remained slippery and elusive.

Justin Kaplan, author of an admirable book on Mark Twain, has risen to this challenge. For the first time a notably independent mind has attempted to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grasp the whole Whitman phenomenon. This is quite as much a matter of style and organization as of conclusions. Kaplan knows that assembled data have no voice; he has written in his own person and takes full responsibility for his judgments—if you wish to differ with him you must commit yourself as completely as he has. The form his judgments take is often implicit in the texture of the prose, the massing of concurrent cultural detail, the layering of observations, the placement of quotations from Whitman and others. The inscription of the lines and shadows of an image of Whitman take precedence over sequential narration. There is no better book on the Whitman one might have known than *Walt Whitman: A Life*.

Kaplan's book on Mark Twain celebrates but doesn't inquire into the literary miracle: Twain's creation of characterizing voices as unmistakable as those of Falstaff or Hamlet. The interplay of Sam Clemens with his demanding alter ego, Mark Twain, and with his times; his disastrously complete internalization of the human cussedness around him—such things furnish the core of *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*. But in Whitman's case, Kaplan had to face the awkward fact that the literary miracle occupies the foreground of the poet's life almost to the exclusion of such active and dramatic encounters with others as Clemens had every day.

We learn how Kaplan means to solve this problem when we open the new book; it begins with the end, the eight years preceding Whitman's death in 1892, years during which he is largely confined to his cluttered Camden nest. In this period Whitman comes as close as he ever did to being defined and circumscribed by his human contacts and public admiration. Death, which Kaplan sees as Whitman's abiding preoccupation, is now in view, and the granite mausoleum Whitman commissions serves as a framing backdrop. In the rest of the book death, which first appears as a coda, is treated as a leitmotif.

These opening chapters on the end of "a life" offer both Kaplan and the poet, who is liberally quoted, chances to epitomize its meaning. They also make possible the conclusion of Kaplan's book, which treats the immediately preceding years in which Whitman, enjoying a period of relatively good health after his first two strokes, published still another edition of *Leaves of Grass* along with *Democratic Vistas* and *Specimen Days*. The naked Whitman, carrying on a therapeutic wrestling match with the saplings in a grove at Timber Creek, is also the man capable of a sociably direct address to the nation, that qualified affirmation of the American future expressed in *Democratic Vistas*. Whitman finds that the infant giant of a nation, an enormous material success, is woefully corrupt and lacks a soul which its poets to come, a group of "sweet democratic despots," can alone supply. Kaplan's final emphasis falls, then, on years (1876-82) in which Whitman came to "a remarkable radiance and openness of spirit, despite griefs and illnesses." The structure of the biography blurs the fact that Whitman's willingness to confide our fate to future poets is a retreat from his unqualified claim to a universal vision in the first two editions of *Leaves of Grass*—those of 1855 and 1856.

The bulk of the book that lies between these opening and closing segments is largely topical. Kaplan keeps a skeleton narrative going, but is chiefly concerned with what is most important: a sense of the cultural medium in which Whitman moved. The topics are familiar, but Kaplan's handling of them makes absorbing reading. Whitman's occupations—printer, schoolteacher, newspaper writer and editor, Democratic politician, author of short stories, speculative builder in Brooklyn—are less prominent than what played on his sensibility. Among the influences and experiences Kaplan orchestrates here are Whitman's family, his Dutch ancestry, the Long Island of his youth, the father who was agin the "interests," Quakerism and Elias Hicks, the glitter and shine of the goods displayed on Broadway and the crowds and omnibuses that filled it, the opera, a quantity of miscellaneous reading and reviewing, the water cure and phrenology (of which Kaplan makes excellent use), Dr. Abbott's museum of Egyptian antiquities, Frances Wright's account of classical Greece, and so on. Kaplan adds a suggestive touch to our sense of Whitman as a detached social atom when he notes that half the population of the city lived in boarding-houses in 1841. His examination of Whitman's emotional makeup, as against these details of his world, turns chiefly on the evidence offered by the fiction he wrote before *Leaves of Grass* was dreamed of.

Most of what Kaplan says about this seems sensible. He emphasizes Whitman's tie to his mother, the only person who reciprocated his love, and speaks of Whitman's impulse to love as "chronically objectless," quoting Edgar Z. Friedenberg on a type called "subject-homoerotic," a type who has "no true external love-object—at least initially. Such men love boys as a way of loving the boy in themselves and themselves in the boy." Kaplan accepts Robert K. Martin's judgment as to Whitman's dominant sexual fantasy, and finds a representation of fellatio in "The Sleepers." He also finds a persistent biographical strain in the episodes in the stories in which Whitman assumes a quasi-parental role with youngsters, and underscores his tie to his brother Jeff. But I stumble over Kaplan's stress on what he finds elemental in Whitman's sense of the world, a fear of death. There is a fundamental distortion here which affects both Kaplan's account of Whitman's psyche and of that cultural bombshell, *Leaves of Grass*.

Kaplan's inference seems logical: Whitman took public possession of his body ("I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones"), and was emotionally so isolated that his engaging narcissism must have been accompanied by fears for his little fortress of flesh. But Whitman's own work doesn't seem to support Kaplan. Death is regularly represented as a phase in the recurrent pulses of generation, a view concisely expressed in the openly sexual context of "Spontaneous Me": "The dead leaf whirling its spiral whirl and falling still and content on the ground." In this line screwing and creation, death and decay are simultaneously caught up, just as in the final line of "Song of Myself" the poet evokes the omnipresence of the ever-dying, ever-renewed grass: "Look for me under your bootsoles." Death as the terror of the extinction of one's unique consciousness has no place in Whitman's cosmic myth.

Whitman's actual fear, the correlative of the tremendous assertion which remains unqualified in the first two edi-

"AND NOW, the Bowdlerized Bible. The National Council of Churches is working on a revised Revised Standard Version, with all the filthy sexist language scrubbed out. The Lord's prayer will begin: 'Oh God, Who is [sic] to us as a true Parent...' Rumor has it the translation is being executed by a team of eunuchs. If there is a God, may It visit Its wrath upon us."

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tions of *Leaves of Grass*, was much more immediate and emotionally commonplace than the fear of dying. It was the fear, to use a phrase Kaplan twice employs, of "the obliteration of identity." Such a fear is felt not as a fear of death but as an overwhelming need to create a total order to hold oneself together. Such world pictures, when compulsively visited on everybody one meets, are called madness. When encysted and actually given form, as Whitman's was, they might, and in the case of this genius did, constitute what may be called an exemplary psychosis, evidence not simply of one man's desperation, but of the presence of a like desperation in others—the tremendous assertion turns out to have supplied a widely shared emotional demand. The readiness of Whitman's most percipient friend, John Burroughs, to accept his cosmic myth, not as a detached work of art, but as the product of a natural force with no social ground whatever, is evidence of his readiness to make the extensive denials of the prevailing culture such massive affirmations concealed. The same readiness to embrace Whitman's affirmations was displayed by Henry Miller 80 years later, and by Allen Ginsberg in the decade of the centennial of *Leaves of Grass*. Both knew how radical a transformation of consciousness Whitman had demanded.

The program set down in the poetry and prose of 1855 which is designed to clear the ground for our yea-sayer provides that there shall be no more stories, since stories limit their characters to reciprocal roles and prevent their incorporation of all existence. Christian providence and history also have to go; they are institutionalized stories. When the past is referred to it becomes an instance of the poet's own universal presence. Detached aesthetic objects had to go; poems were hereafter to be, as John Burroughs put it, "out-flamings, out-rushings of the fires of the poet's soul." Love affairs are also ruled out, since they shrink you and aggrandize your lover. The whole intent of this cultural housecleaning is to get rid of imposed roles in behalf of the exercise of a "natural" force—Allen Ginsberg put it succinctly in the 1960s when he wrote, "All separate identities are bankrupt." Each of us is to be a natural force extending to the horizon and back to the beginning of things.

In the late 1850s this powerful vision, the state of one possessed, simply lapsed. Having gained the ego strength he required to do so, Whitman fell in love. The result was that he was no longer in imaginative possession of the whole world. He wrote a lament for the loss of this power, "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life." This was published in the third (1860) edition of *Leaves of Grass*, in which the poet—who no longer scorned love affairs—printed the remarkable erotic poetry of the "Calamus" section, and the operatic torch song, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," which, Asselineau suggests, memorializes the loss of a lover. Whitman now began to lead a double life both in the flesh and in this and all following editions of *Leaves of Grass*. He was both the poet of the inclusive vision of "Song of Myself" and "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and the lesser yet highly accomplished poet of his later work. But it is biographically crucial that his full realization of his homosexuality made him more, not less, a member of society, despite the fact that the love expressed in the "Calamus" poems had no social sanction. Whitman had escaped the painful isolation which attended the exemplary psychosis; yet he and his friends knew that the poetry it had led to was his greatest achievement.

drawing of Walt Whitman by Jack Coughlin

What Kaplan puts in the place of this biographical break is a conventionally alienated poet who had, from 1855 on, contended with his age, while covertly borrowing a good deal from earlier poetic traditions. Kaplan neglects the arguments for a break in Whitman's sense of himself offered by Asselineau and Bychowski, and Roy Harvey Pearce's conclusion that in the first two editions of his book Whitman was "at once subject and object in his world," as well as the classic essay on the 1855 edition by John Kinnaird. In Kaplan's account no psychological break occurs. Whit-

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man is said to have expressed his depression over having omitted his love for men from his earlier work in "As I Ebb'd With the Ocean of Life." The weight of the conclusions of those named above is considerable; it is, I think, far more plausible to see this poem as concerned with the loss of the visionary power that had informed the first two editions.

But the question is not simply biographical, nor does it relate to poetic tradition alone; it involves a major issue in our cultural history. Whitman resembles the early Emerson in a fundamental way; he too abolished the dialectic and reciprocal character of human existence in his first two editions. He had to deny that there was any real opposition to his vision; he could not, nor could Emerson, write as an alienated poet. If a total vision was indeed total there could be no effectual resistance to it. It is the very heart of American individualism of this classic kind that it sees the whole world as open to its emotional and cognitive grasp.

The Whitman of 1855 and 1856 bestrides the continent—there is nothing intractable in the human condition. When Kaplan speaks of the poet's unpublished pamphlet of 1856, "The Eighteenth Presidency," as "*Leaves of Grass* restated as campaign literature," he is saying that Whitman takes the stance of an aggrieved opponent of things as they are instead of proposing a transformation of consciousness. Whitman is being described as one of the "contenders" from whom he dissociates himself. There are poems in the 1856 edition that indicate Whitman's covert acknowledgment of opponents, but they all reflect the awareness that if he is to be the bearer of a fresh and wholly inclusive consciousness, a "new man," he must not appear as one voice among others in a political or literary arena. The new man must speak for everybody.

Kaplan generalizes his picture of a conventionally alienated poet in such passages as this:

> The founders led a revolution, but they left a tradition. How could he reconcile tradition with the revolutionary impulse to be his single self alone?

And later:

> Whitman subscribed to both culture and anarchy, tradition and revolution, and he sailed toward a new dispensation under the opposed slogans, 'Let us now praise famous men,' and, word of the modern, 'Make it new.'

THE CHOICE

A clear sky may tell it wrong
when its warming light crosses
eyes and arms of a woman you have loved
and a blue pitcher standing on the window table.

All is bright, and must rejoice
in the sea-light gleaming across to the foothills
as wordless the barley sings outside,
"Think now of November".

Pinned by the exacting sun, the heart
grows its second skin
but always fire has a last word
and speaks it out, no matter—

speaks it out to the troubled ghost
rising at night from a wakeful page
who moves in the shadows of the woman's room
like a man of ash and water.

The ocean girdles this sliding earth
as the hopeful lover chooses,
not knowing the face that will be revealed
to a new sun shining through . . .

The woman has a tranquil look
but the room seems gathering in a tear
as he sits in his studious chair all night
reading the breathing book.

Frederick Morgan

He strikes the same note when he speaks of Whitman's first edition as "assembled in hot and arrogant haste," as if the possessed poet had had his eye on others when he assembled his book.

Kaplan's most thoroughgoing effort to contain Whitman, to make him a social being at any cost, is found in his account of Whitman's experience as a volunteer nurse in Washington during the Civil War. This is the crucial passage:

> Never before had his chronically objectless love been 'so thoroughly and (so far) permanently absorbed to the very roots, as by these huge swarms of dear, wounded, sick, dying boys—I get very much attached.' But nursing, socially the most approved although instinctually not the most gratifying channel for a grand passion, proved to be a dangerous occupation. The perfect health Whitman was so proud of broke in the hospitals along with a delicate structure of denial and sublimation. Love became irreversibly linked with disease, mutilation, death, absence, further reaches of that sterile shoreline he glimpsed before the war.

But it was after the war and his illness that Whitman romped with Harry Stafford at Timber Creek and wrote Burroughs when they were coming on a visit that they were accustomed to sharing a bed. Whitman's loves certainly brought him the "perturbations" he notes in his journals, but hardly the damp and dreary obsession with suffering humanity Kaplan suggests. And he was also buoyed up by the admiration and attention of Burroughs, O'Connor, and Bucke, who rejoiced in their induction into the consciousness of the "new man" which enabled them to shuck off so much of the prevailing culture. Whitman was no longer quite that man, but he greatly enjoyed playing the role of the man he had been. *Leaves of Grass* was his script, and the fact that he sometimes improved the script—although he more often made it less effective—proves that the new man still flickered in him.

I am grateful for *Walt Whitman: A Life* because it brings one so much closer to a Whitman one might have known as his contemporaries knew him, and because Kaplan, in taking imaginative possession of everything he knows

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about the poet and giving it a shape, has made it easier for everybody to see how Whitman has been understood in the past. But I feel that the dimensions and the cultural significance of the literary miracle Whitman worked have escaped Kaplan. His Whitman is given a biographical continuity at the cost of an understanding of what turns out to be his representative American character. The Whitman one could hardly have known, who was "at once subject and object in his world," the Whitman of 1855 and 1856, was painfully isolated and yet—the paradox is only seeming—profoundly in touch with Americans who shared his deep impulse to come out of culture, to get rid of familial and social roles, to envision themselves as natural forces. What Kaplan fails to make room for is the sweet democratic despot whose imperial assertion was indeed despotic, whose total wisdom was what many hungered for, assumed and have in increasing measure assumed ever since, in short, a representative American.

Quentin Anderson

Quentin Anderson, author of *The Imperial Self* (Knopf), teaches American literature at Columbia.

Before the Fall

Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran by Barry Rubin

(Oxford University Press; $17.50)

When in 1944 the State Department submitted to President Roosevelt proposals for American involvement in the reform and economic development of postwar Iran, Roosevelt was enthusiastic. He wrote his secretary of state, Cordell Hull, that he was "thrilled by the idea of using Iran as an example of what we could do by an unselfish American policy." The American task in Iran, as the State Department (and Roosevelt) saw it, was to "break the stranglehold of the entrenched classes and to ensure for the mass of the population a fairer share of the proceeds of their labor." Roosevelt believed the task could be accomplished by an infusion of able American advisers "loyal to their ideals." Thus began the American involvement in Iranian affairs.

In the aptly named *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* Barry Rubin tells the story of this involvement, one that began with the American desire to help Iran achieve prosperity and democratic government and which culminated with the leaders of Iran's new Islamic Republic denouncing the United States as "the great Satan" and as "the greatest oppressor of the century."

Apart from its intrinsic value, this well-written book is of interest on at least two counts. Rubin challenges many aspects of what, since the Iranian revolution of 1979, has become the conventional view of the United States-Iran relationship. The United States, in Rubin's account, has not been the villain, nor the shah the American puppet, that many in Iran, Europe, and the United States have been wont to suggest.

At the same time, by placing the evolution of American policy toward Iran in its historical context, Rubin is able to trace both the continuities in this policy and what appears to him to be a dramatic change, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the underlying assumptions and attitudes of American policymakers on Iran. For the two decades beginning in 1945, the United States, according to Rubin, had consistently urged arms restraint and domestic reform on the shah. Late in the Johnson administration, however, the policy of urging domestic reform was set aside; and during the Nixon administration, in a radical departure from past practice, the policy of arms restraint was abandoned as well. The United States finally acquiesced in meeting the shah's seemingly insatiable demands for armaments and conceded to him the recognition and role he had long sought for himself in Iran, in the region, and in his relationship with the United States. How and why this transformation came about, and its consequences, constitute the core of Rubin's book.

In the early years, a marked difference in perception characterized the relationship between the shah and various American administrations. The shah believed Iran should stand at the center of American concerns. Seen from Washington, Iran stood much lower on the order of priorities. The shah wanted massive American financing for Iran's development program; the United States saw this program as overambitious.

The shah dreamed of a large army and the latest in tanks and aircraft, and he wanted a defense capacity large enough to deter a Soviet advance. He was told to keep his army small and to rely instead on the American defense shield. The shah believed that the main threat to Iran was external (initially a threat posed by Russia, in later years a danger deriving from real or imagined Arab enemies). American policy-makers believed that the major threat was internal, rooted in misgovernment, corruption, oligarchy, and poverty.

In the years when Truman and Acheson were in the White House and the State Department, the shah was thus told that increased American assistance was contingent on the establishment of democratic institutions and a free press and on the introduction of land reform. He was repeatedly advised to moderate his ambitions for the army. In a prescient view of what was to occur in 1979, Acheson told the shah in 1949 that a large conscript army would not only detract from efforts at economic and social reform but might also disintegrate in the face of a real challenge. But the shah was obsessed with the possibility of military defeat. "The substance of Acheson's position," writes Rubin, "seemed to elude him."

Nor was the shah himself highly regarded. The American ambassador in Tehran noted that the shah's aspirations for modern armaments were "strictly in never never land." After meeting the shah in 1949, Acheson noted that he was a young man "full of grandiose ideas; he fancied himself a great military leader." During the Mossadegh period in the early 1950s the shah appeared weak and vacillating; in the early 1960s he was seen as resisting pressure for democratization.

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Moreover, as viewed from Washington, there seemed to be little material on which to build a program for democratization. The landlord-dominated parliament would not enact measures of social reform. An attempt by the shah to increase his powers might, it was thought, open the door to a right-wing dictatorship. The prime minister in early 1950, Ali Mansur, was so corrupt that he sent round to inquire about the price for securing the American ambassador's support. His successor, Ali Razmara, told the ambassador that the only way to implement the development program "might be to imprison recalcitrant Majlis (parliament) members and run the country with dictatorial powers."

At times the United States thought it might be possible to build a policy around an independent, reform-minded prime minister. In 1950 General Ali Razmara appeared to the United States to be such a man. But the shah, as he would later work to undermine other strong prime ministers, moved to undermine Razmara, and in any case an assassin's bullet quickly terminated Razmara's term in office.

Razmara's successor, Mohammad Mossadegh, was initially also viewed in Washington as a prime minister who might carry out essential reforms. By nationalizing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Mossadegh earned for himself the enthusiastic support of his countrymen and the uncompromising hostility of the British government. But the United States, Rubin points out in his treatment of this controversial period, was at first sympathetic to the Iranian cause.

Washington urged flexibility on the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and tried to mediate the dispute, but with "a pronounced pro-Iran tilt." It encouraged American oil firms (unsuccessfully) to bypass the British oil embargo. Aid to Iran, only $1.6 million in 1951, the year Mossadegh came to power, rose to $23.4 million in 1952.

Rubin concedes that the election of Eisenhower and the appointment of Dulles as secretary of state influenced American policy toward Mossadegh, as both men were unsympathetic to third world nationalist movements. But he argues that the final falling out between the United States and Mossadegh largely was due to the Iranian prime minister's own failings.

An aroused populace and extremists at Mossadegh's flanks made it impossible for the prime minister to settle the oil dispute. The idea of compromise came to be equated with treason. "Don't you realize," Mossadegh remarked after another round of failed negotiations in Washington in October 1951, "that, returning to Iran empty-handed, I return in a much stronger position than if I returned with an agreement which I would have to sell to my fanatics?"

For various reasons, Mossadegh's support among the religious leaders, some elements of the middle class, and his own National Front grouping of parties was seriously eroded. He took a series of steps, such as dissolving the parliament and assuming personal powers, that further lost him support. American aid was enough only to keep the government afloat; more, Rubin believes, was precluded by Mossadegh's own inflexibility, thus intensifying the gradual breakdown of the administration. Finally the Tudeh (Communist) party was growing in strength, and Mossadegh tried to use the specter of a Tudeh takeover to win American backing. This was precisely the kind of threat calculated to cause grave anxiety in Washington.

In June 1953, the Eisenhower administration finally agreed to go along with "Operation Ajax," the undercover operation, sponsored by both the CIA and Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, that helped mount the coup that in August of that year overthrew Mossadegh and restored the shah to power. The CIA's Kermit Roosevelt was put in charge of the mission.

Roosevelt slipped into Iran in July, met with the shah at midnight in a car on the grounds of the royal palace (Roosevelt had entered the palace grounds hidden under a blanket in the back of the car), drew up his plans, and established contact with the shah's supporters. He was authorized to spend one million dollars on the coup arrangements. In fact, he had to spend only $100,000—for distribution among the street toughs and athletic clubs that mounted the street demonstrations that were a prominent feature of the shah's return to power.

Rubin seems to accept Roosevelt's account of these events pretty much at face value. "All in all," he writes, "only five Americans with a half-dozen Iranian contacts had organized the entire uprising. Having finished his part of the operation, Roosevelt relaxed at a friend's house in Tehran to await results." But he also argues that the coup could not have come off without "a reservoir of support" for the shah. "It would be misleading to conclude," he writes,

> that the United States helped evict a popular and nationalist government and replace it with an unpopular and antinationalist one. By the autumn of 1953 Iran was at the end of its tether; the Communists were growing in strength and the National Front was disintegrating.

Although Rubin provides some fascinating new details on these events, he sheds little fresh light on the Iranian side of the operation. Since he has had access to much of the US diplomatic correspondence for the period, one must assume American participants in the operation also little understood the Iranian undercurrents during those fateful August days. Rubin certainly exaggerates the support there was for the shah after the overthrow of Mossadegh. Mossadegh's support may have been ebbing away, but the tide was not flowing toward the shah. In the aftermath, Iranians felt they had been deprived by a foreign power of their bid for national independence. The shah never could live down the stigma of being an American puppet, and the seeds were planted for a sense of national grievance and bitterness whose harvest was reaped in revolution a quarter of a century later.

At the same time, even if one accepts Rubin's assertion that after the revolution traditional American policy of urging the shah to devote less energy on building up his army and more on developing the country's economic and political infrastructure remained unchanged, one must also add that this is not the way the relationship looked in Tehran, where the American administration appeared to identify itself closely with the shah and with the policy of suppression he pursued in the country.

Coming:

Anthony Burgess on the Irish Art of Short-Story Writing.

Correction:

In the review of *The National Interest and the Human Interest*, by Robert C. Johansen (*TNR*, November 1), we neglected to note that Princeton University Press has issued a paperback edition for $6.95.

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It was partly for this reason that the Iranian policy of the Kennedy administration appeared at the time to be such a sharp break with the Eisenhower years. Kennedy was concerned about the stability of the shah's regime and sought in early 1962 to shift the shah's priorities from military to economic concerns. The shah, after a series of meetings, was persuaded to go along and gear a smaller military establishment "to military realities rather than the glamor of advanced weaponry"; and he was encouraged to press ahead with economic and social reform.

But this policy, according to Rubin, was to change with the Johnson and Nixon administrations. By the end of the Johnson administration the shah had been granted his desire to build Iran into a military power in the Persian Gulf; during the Nixon-Kissinger years, Iran emerged from its traditional "peripheral" position to become the major pillar of support for American interests in the region. "This change," writes Rubin,

> did not represent, however, a victory for American over Iranian concerns; rather, it marked the triumph of the shah's own long-held view of a proper role for himself over twenty years of State Department reservations.

Rubin attributes this dramatic change in American policy to developments in Iran, to changes in the regional and international balance of power, and to changes within the American administration itself. In Iran the shah appeared to be in complete control. Besides, the country was experiencing rapid economic development, and modernization theory tended to equate economic development with the development of desirable forms of government.

In the region, Soviet arms deliveries to Iraq and Egypt, coupled with a perceived expansion of Russian influence in the Middle East, gave an edge to the shah's armament demands. As a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the power balance was severely shaken. "New attitudes were born about the political value of a strong military to small nations. The Shah's prophecies about the region's instability seemed fulfilled."

The British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and the hope that Iran, along with Saudi Arabia, could fill the power vacuum also encouraged the trends toward increased arms deliveries. The "Nixon doctrine," first enunciated in 1969, was founded on the principle of leaving regional security to "regional superpowers," whose armies would be supplied by the United States. Finally, during his May 1972 visit to Iran, Nixon agreed to permit the shah to buy all the non-nuclear arms Iran wanted, subject to certain review procedures. This, coupled with the quadrupling of Iran's oil revenues in 1973, opened the floodgates to Iran's massive arms purchases.

Besides, as Rubin points out, the United States as seen from Washington had far less leverage on the shah than is often supposed, while the shah in these years was not without leverage of his own. The State Department took seriously his threat to turn to the Russians for arms. He was owed a debt for not joining the Arab oil boycott in 1973. Possession of oil and, after 1973, of enormous purchasing power itself gave his demands considerable weight.

If one accepts Rubin's account of the Nixon-Kissinger years, then one must also conclude that the internal checks and balances in the American administration governing the shaping of foreign and arms policy broke down. Kissinger repeatedly was able to override Defense Department objections to virtually unlimited arms sales to the shah and in time "even the annual review of the arms program was phased out." After the Nixon decision to give the shah the arms he wanted, Rubin says, policy became "a matter for implementation, not debate; the Defense Department review become a rubber stamp."

In the various government departments,

> everyone . . . knew that contradicting the White House line would not be welcome. Under such circumstances reports would be returned for rewriting and the individual's career might be unfavorably affected. Internal government analysis over Iran became an exercise in the mobilization of wishful thinking.

Thus, when the movement against the shah began to gather force, the administration was ill equipped to understand, much less influence, it; and Rubin shows that the failure to grasp the nature of the movement and the underlying attitudes of the Khomeini regime continued to plague American policy in the post-revolution period, as an attempt was made to build on the promise of moderates like Mehdi Bazargan, the first prime minister of the Islamic Republic.

Rubin attempts a detailed reconstruction of American policy-making in the final, hectic weeks before the shah's fall. Other such detailed accounts have already appeared: William Sullivan, the last American ambassador to Iran before the revolution, has given a personal account; a detailed version has appeared in the *Washington Quarterly* and, most recently, in a series of articles in the *Washington Post*.

Rubin's account follows a style that appears to be much in vogue among some contemporary chroniclers of the great events of current American politics. It attempts a reconstruction on the basis of personal interviews; it tries to piece together a day-by-day, if not sometimes an hour-by-hour, account of individual conversations, closed-door meetings, Oval Office encounters. By its very nature, such an account will reflect a highly personalized view of events; and as the various versions already available (and others that are beginning to appear in Persian from the Iranian actors in the drama) demonstrate, men will differ sharply over what they think happened. The accumulation of detail tends to obscure the larger picture. Such an account also raises important questions about the writing of history; for it measures history in hours and minutes. It may be, of course, that the great movements of history are nothing more than the accumulation of small decisions taken by individuals only imperfectly understanding what they are doing. This is perhaps a legitimate view of history, but it is not the view reflected in the earlier chapters of Rubin's book.

But here, as elsewhere, Rubin provides a highly readable account. Incisive observations are liberally strewn

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through every chapter. He has an eye for the telling quotation or incident. He has not perhaps delved into the primary sources as deeply as we would sometimes like—for example over the Azerbaijan crisis of 1945-46. But he has worked into his book much material of interest from various presidential papers and State Department archives. He does not attempt a concluding chapter that would weave together the many strands of this rich and highly suggestive account. But he provides material for future exploration. This book will be discussed and argued about.

Shaul Bakhash

Shaul Bakhash is a visiting associate professor in the department of Near Eastern studies at Princeton. He is at work on a book about the Iranian revolution.

Two Lost Causes

Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War by Eric Foner

(Oxford University Press; $15.95)

There is something wrong about any survey of the American historical landscape that overlooks its most rugged and dominant feature—the Civil War. Yet according to Eric Foner, that is just what the "new social history" and the "new political history" have been inclined to do. With graphs and charts and tables of statistics on family, ethnic, and urban history, on histories of sexuality, criminality, and social mobility, they pave over the Great Divide with throughways of "continuity." Speeding along over them we often override the chasms left yawning by the Civil War as if they were not there.

Eric Foner, this year's Pitt Professor at Cambridge University, contends that

> a satisfactory portrait of the American experience cannot emerge from an attempt to read the Civil War out of American history. . . . The Civil War, after all, raised the decisive questions of our national existence—war and peace, relations between the states and the federal government, the balance between force and consent in generating obedience to authority, and, of course, the pervasive problem of race which still bedevils American society.

The Civil War confronts us with "timeless moral questions . . . questions of 'why,' rather than 'how,' which gave traditional historical studies much of their vitality and which never appear in 'social science' histories."

The first big "why," the traditional question of the causes of the war, *has* in fact been addressed by the new political historians with their social-science methods, but Foner flatly rejects their findings. Granting that "they should force historians to abandon whatever economic determinism still persists," he holds that they merely have substituted a one-dimensional "religious man" for the old "economic man." Their key variables of religion and ethnicity exist independently of historical context—time, place, and rate of acculturation—and their mode of explanation is "fundamentally ahistorical."

The thesis of "modernization" offered by political science he finds somewhat more compatible with his views of the war. But he points out that the term is very imprecise and often suggests the old Beardean view of conflict between industrial and agrarian economies. The main trouble with the modernization explanation is that it confuses consequences with causes. Granting that the war had some results that could be called "modernizing," they were not necessarily intended results. Both north and south, contends Foner, were premodern societies. "Each side fought to defend a distinct vision of the good society, but each vision was destroyed by the very struggle to preserve it"—Lincoln's as well as Jefferson Davis's.

So while there was one decisive defeat and one unmistakable victory in military terms, the outcome of the conflict was not one but two lost causes. And that, I think, is Foner's most striking insight, though he does not put it quite that way.

When he turns to his own explanation of the causes of the war he takes more traditional ground. His basic contention is that "the coming of the Civil War is the story of the intrusion of sectional ideology into the political system." The national parties of the old system had served to relieve social tensions, order group conflict, and integrate society. The collapse of the second party system and the intrusion of sectional ideology had the opposite effect. Each side became obsessed with conspiratorial theories about the other. In Foner's opinion the south was right in assuming that Lincoln's election in the long run posed a real danger to slavery.

His account of the part the antislavery movement played in the sectional crisis is spared no ambiguity, and endowed with no simplification. To summarize is to simplify. But essentially a despised and unpopular doctrine of protest was democratized by being reduced to its lowest common denominator—which was racial prejudice. Thus one could combine anti-Negro prejudice, which was all but universal among northern whites, with opposition to slavery, which was confined to the south. And in doing so one could idealize free labor and the northern economic system as the antithesis of slavery and the southern economy. Patriotism could mean keeping it a white man's country and keeping blacks down south.

Like many books that stress the importance of the Civil War, this one skips over the war and jumps from causes to consequences. But it has important things to say about both—and especially about the latter. The author is dead right in fixing on control of black labor as the basic issue of Reconstruction, as it was in all the emancipations and reconstructions in a score of other slave societies of the New World. How to get ex-slaves back to work in the fields, mines, and factories as freedmen—that was the question. Like Stanley Elkins on "Sambo," Foner asks, "Why did so many [southern] whites constantly claim that blacks were lazy and idle?" He concludes that simple racism "does not go to the heart of the matter." Instead of working harder as freedmen than as slaves, as Adam Smith and the abolitionists and Yankee enterprisers expected, the freedmen preferred to work less and take their women out of the fields. Most of them were happy to settle for subsistence farming, like many small white farmers, and wanted nothing so much as a small plot of their own on which to pursue that limited goal. To the dismay of Yankees who flocked

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south to exploit their labor, as Willie Lee Rose and Lawrence Powell have shown in their studies of the period, freedmen too often proved unmanageable and unexploitable in proper wage-slave fashion.

Fresh from slavery, black labor simply lacked the classic marketplace discipline and incentives and consumer urges. As one New England businessman said, it was necessary to "multiply their simple wants." But multiplying and satisfying wants and instilling an alien discipline proved slow business. The cry for land for freedmen became unfashionable. Northern "radicalism" waned, and the "radicals" withdrew and left the problem in the hands of southern whites. The old masters had given up the lash and the black codes and compromised by accepting the sharecropping system. But they curbed black access to landownership (as Jamaica planters had failed to do) and they soon learned to substitute the bonds of debt for those of slavery and to extend the new bondage among whites as well. Both races were back in the fields and hard at work, but it was not much of a triumph for "modernization."

The excellent chapter on free labor is followed by one entitled "Thaddeus Stevens, Confiscation, and Reconstruction." It is a tribute. The old iron-master politician from Pennsylvania proves irresistible for radicals of all kinds. He was out there in front of his party preaching emancipation, arming the blacks, protecting their rights, and demanding revolution (for the south only) ahead of anybody else. But the thing that really brings the radicals to their feet with cheers is Stevens's bill for the confiscation of rebel estates, nearly 400 million acres, he estimated. That would have provided the elusive 40-acre plots for the freedman. But this would have required only about 40 million acres. What often goes unmentioned (here as well) is that the rest, nine-tenths of the confiscated land, was to be sold to the highest bidders. In other words, Yankee speculators and monopolists.

Of course the Stevens confiscation bill, with its revolutionary implications for property rights, never had a chance with a middle-class, property-minded party like the Republicans. But it is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had it passed. Presumably much the same congressmen, committees, civil servants, military officers, and businessmen would have administered and abused the public lands for the freedmen as had contemporaneously administered and abused the public lands for the homesteaders (more than a billion acres) and the redskins. And had they been no more scrupulous in their dealings with the freedmen than they were with the white homesteaders and the red Indians—then God help the blacks! In fact Congress did set aside nearly 48 million acres of public land in the south (less desirable and accessible than the planter estates, of course) for the blacks, and the speculators got it all, or all of it they wanted, in short order.

Waiving all these nagging doubts, however, and assuming the freedmen all settled down on their elusive plots with an army mule and Thad Stevens's blessing—what then? The incentives and disciplines of the marketplace are further postponed and "modernization" has suffered another setback. On the other hand the lost cause count would have been cut in half, for the unrealized vision for blacks sounds rather like the vision of America which Lincoln fought for and, as Foner points out, failed to gain.

The final chapter, a quarter of the book, is on the Irish Land League in America in the 1880s. While interesting in itself, it does not accommodate itself very well to the above discussion or to the title of the book. The other essays, however, address a great theme with style, with learning, with originality, and with a spirit of discovery and open-mindedness.

C. Vann Woodward

C. Vann Woodward is professor of history emeritus at Yale University. His *Mary Chestnuts's Civil War* will be published next spring by Yale University Press.

For Tito—With Love and Squalor

Tito: The Story from Inside by Milovan Djilas

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $9.95)

In a short story, "The Leper," written a year after his fall from power, Milovan Djilas used a fictional plot to vent his bitterness against Marshal Tito. The two men had been close friends for 17 years—as Marxist conspirators, guerrilla fighters, and finally as rulers of communist Yugoslavia—when a dispute over future policies turned them into bitter enemies.

Twenty-six years after he was defeated and turned into a "leper" in his own country, Djilas has written a nonfictional account of his years with Tito. Since their break Tito had become a major international figure; his funeral attracted a large gathering of world leaders. Djilas, who spent a total of nine years in jail and whose books are banned in Yugoslavia, remains a "leper" even after Tito's death and is the subject of considerable government abuse.

Perhaps because of such a calamitous past relationship, it should not come as a surprise that Djilas's *Tito: The Story from Inside* seems like an extension of personal rivalry, an effort to settle old scores with a final salvo at his great opponent who had subjected Djilas to so much suffering. Hastily written while Tito was on his deathbed earlier this year, the book is somewhat disappointing, especially if compared with Djilas's marvelous *Conversations with Stalin*.

I would have liked Djilas to have dwelled less on Tito's predilection for luxury, pomp, fancy uniforms, and young wives. A profusion of such information—for instance, that Tito's belt buckle was solid gold, or that he had a bronze statue of his horse installed at his official residence—contribute little to the understanding of Tito's long and unusual career. The measure of the man as a national leader was not his vanity or other human failings but rather the conception he held of his country's place in the world.

During his 35 years in power, Tito defied Stalin, abandoned the suffocating Soviet-style centralism in favor of "consumer socialism," opened Yugoslavia's borders, gave home rule to various ethnic groups, and introduced a meas-

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ure of freedom greater than in any other communist country. He carved out a unique place for the country: a part of the socialist world yet independent—definitely not a satellite—a leader of the third world yet on good terms with most Western countries. To manage such policies required the abilities of an exceptional man.

Yet, despite its shortcomings, this is an important book which gives us the inside story. This is particularly true when the author abandons psychological theorizing in favor of expository

photo of Tito by Ivo Eterović from *Tito* (McGraw-Hill)

chapters, several of them beautifully written, that perhaps inadvertently provide unique insights. The Tito that emerges from these pages is an astute practical politician, bored by Marxist abstractions, never taking ideology very seriously (at least not as a means of interpreting the actions of others), a natural leader with a Byzantine mind.

Already in 1944, before flying to Italy for a meeting with Churchill, Tito gave parting instructions to a member of the Yugoslav Politburo: "Take care of my horse." A few years later, when Djilas was outlining for Tito a Marxist view of history, Tito snapped, "Nonsense, often the entire course of history depends on one person." Or, while they were burying an old comrade and Djilas, the Marxist intellectual, was telling Tito that there existed nothing beyond matter, Tito interrupted by saying, "Who knows what it is all about anyway, who knows?"

The last two chapters are perhaps most thoughtful and revealing as Djilas attempts to use his break with Tito to understand both himself and his opponent. Their bond, he says, "was forged in bloody struggle and friendship rather than through ideas." He concedes that he "lacked political instinct" for subtle and gradual strategy. Yet when Djilas started urging greater democratization of political life, Tito drew back as soon as he detected that this might undermine his personal authority.

Ironically, after defeating Djilas, Tito gradually adopted many of his ideas and cautiously worked them into the system. But for Djilas, their dispute raised the question of theoretical purity and he could not, he says, support a man who subjugated the ideas of socialism as well as the country itself "to his own power and glory." Politics was not the proper setting for Djilas's talents. Once declared a nonperson, he turned to writing because he was determined not to permit life to dwindle into meaninglessness. The pen became his sword, and his intelligence, always incorruptible, earned him a world reputation.

But this is not a historical assessment of Tito. The main thing in politics, Churchill once said, is not whether you can start the race but whether you can stay the course. Djilas does not explain to us how he managed to outlive or outlast his competitors and what were the driving forces that sustained him on this long course. I suspect that Djilas's motives in putting this book together quickly were political. It is as if he were rushing to render a final service to his country. Lesser men who inherited Tito's authority already have sought to deify their late leader. Perhaps Djilas's sharp focus on Tito's human weaknesses was designed to counter that.

Dusko Doder

Dusko Doder is a foreign correspondent for the *Washington Post*.

Eichmann's Emissary

Timetable
by Amos Elon

(Doubleday; $10.95)

We live in a time when American children study the Holocaust in school, American TV presents a new dramatic production on the subject each season, and synagogues and churches alike hold conferences, workshops, and seminars on the persecution of the Jews during World War II. It is a curious phenomenon, outside of the ordinary pursuit of history and memory. It seems as if the TV writers, curriculum developers, and publicists have arisen from a long sleep. They have discovered a new universe, one so strange that it will provoke the most vivid sensations—a perfect media event.

In the midst of this current passion in popular culture, Amos Elon has written an extraordinarily sane and thoughtful novel, *Timetable*, that recounts the attempt to rescue the one million Jews of Hungary by bartering them for supplies which the Germans desperately needed at the end of the war. Through this unusual story, Elon raises general questions about the war and about the role of the Allies in determining the fate of European Jewry. Since *Timetable* is unassuming and unsensational in its approach, it may remain obscure; yet it is a book that is certainly worth a thousand or more pictures, TV productions, seminars, and workshops.

Elon, a Viennese-born Israeli who has written a fascinating biography of Theodor Herzl, as well as books about his own country and about Germany, builds *Timetable* on a true incident: Joel Brand, a Hungarian Jew active in the underground, carried the offer of a deal from the German command to the British, the Americans, and the Jews of Palestine. The rough outline of the story is not in dispute. Adolf Eichmann, in charge of administering the final solution in Hungary, tried to negotiate the sale of the Jews in the hopes of obtaining valuable supplies for the eastern front. He may have been encouraged by superiors who felt that such a scheme would earn them credibility when they faced what was clearly to be a grim postwar fate. The Allies adamantly refused to consider such bargaining, and the British in particular thought it traitorous to contemplate any discussions with the enemy.

This bizarre scheme, as unlikely to

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succeed as it may now seem, provides one of the most sharply dramatic images of both the helplessness of the Jews of Europe and the inability or unwillingness of the Allies to act boldly, unconventionally, to save their lives. It is an image that provokes us to think about the historical reality and the moral issues that lie behind it. The thoughts it provokes are just those that media events suppress.

For Elon's novel requires us to shift our focus from the particular and indisputable facts of Jewish experience to equally important historical and political problems implicit in our understanding of the whole era. Could one indeed have "made a deal" with the enemy while at war with him in order to save a million civilian lives? Were the Allies, at least in part, responsible for these lives although they were neither "enemy" lives nor "allied" ones? If we think we were not responsible, then how do we understand our purposes and goals in World War II? And what does the very question of responsibility in this case reveal about the underlying principles of our society?

Elon knows that these are not simple questions and does no more in his novel than suggest them through the process of storytelling. They are questions, however, that forcefully turn our thinking about World War II toward the conduct of the Allies and its effects on the fate of the Jews. It is a difficult subject and one that has long been upstaged by the too-avid interest in German atrocities. It raises long repressed questions about our own complicity in at least some of the murders committed by our enemy.

Elon tells the Brand story without a trace of the ersatz authenticity that is currently the stock-in-trade of American media artists. He is not interested in shock or horror. As in his equally forceful biography of Herzl, he is gripped by the facts and by an effort to present them reasonably, sharply, and above all, truthfully. With the skills of a fine reporter, he trusts implicitly in the power of concrete events to move the reader's sympathies and his mind. He effaces his own explicit judgments for the sake of an intelligence and control that make it almost a pleasure to read this painful tale.

As much as he is absorbed by the course of events, Elon is also concerned with the actors in the drama. The best portraits are of Moshe Shertok ("Moshe Sharett," who was to be a prime minister of Israel) and of Brand himself. Shertok, incredulous when he first hears of the scheme, becomes obsessed by it, his anxiety driving him from Palestine to Cairo to London, at first puzzled and dubious, gradually unable to bear the thought of the collective Jewish helplessness and the failure of the West. Over Joel Brand's involvement in the affair there has been much controversy and doubtless Elon's version of him will not be the last word. He sees Brand basically as an honest man, acting amidst confusion and danger, and, although impulsive at times, capable of a courage that grows throughout his doomed mission. He leaves speculation about Brand's motives and background outside the scope of the story. Other theories—that he was an adventurer and no loyal defender of his people, that he lied at crucial moments during the course of his mission and afterward—are laid aside. In fact, Yehuda Bauer, a contemporary expert in the field, comes to much the same conclusions as Elon, even as he traces the obvious gaps and inconsistencies in Brand's version of the events. If Elon has been too generous, it is a generosity we can appreciate. How many took such risks, for whatever reasons, and with so little hope of success?

Elon, of course, does not propose that the Allies should have traded with their enemy—trucks for people. But what we are left to speculate about is whether there weren't a whole range of other opportunities available if the Allies had been ready to seize them. Simply procrastination, or an offer to consider negotiation while employing the routines of diplomacy, would have bought some time and helped more people to escape. The Germans were insane enough to believe that a Jewish conspiracy dominated international relations; surely the knowledge of such insanity could have been turned against them by at least a pretense of accepting their scheme. It is this unhappy speculation—what might have been—that Elon, with restraint and understanding, allows to haunt his novel.

In the way that only fiction can, his book prompts us to reflect, to become witnesses to the unresolved problems of history, rather than to indulge ourselves in simulated emotions which further obscure our understanding.

Judith B. Walzer

Judith B. Walzer is assistant to the president at Princeton University.

Brief Reviews

A Man
by Oriana Fallaci

(Simon and Schuster; $14.95)

Oriana Fallaci is probably best known in this country as that ferocious interviewer of the powerful who insists on asking the questions that never seem to occur to the likes of Walter Cronkite and Barbara Walters. She has forced Kissinger to reveal his gun-toting *machismo* under the pressure of her relentless needling and, in the middle of her interview, ripped off the veil that had been imposed on her as a condition for an audience with the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Now she appears before us in a somewhat different guise, that of the novelist. As might be expected, however, *A Man* is not really a novel, but rather a lightly fictionalized treatment of real people and real events in which she herself was thoroughly caught up. The man of the title is Alexander Panagoulis, a member of the Greek resistance who tried, unsuccessfully, to assassinate dictator George Papadopoulos. Fallaci interviewed Panagoulis in 1973 on his release from five years of prison and torture. Despite her dark presentiments, they became lovers.

The novel recounts the crazy ups and downs of their love until Panagoulis's murder in May 1975, and as such, it resounds with the felt immediacy of autobiography. Yet the focus is obsessively fixed on Panagoulis, a brilliantly realized character whom no novelist could ever have invented. He was that *rara avis* in contemporary politics, an authentic idealist ready, almost happy, to die for those abstractions like freedom and justice to which most of us are content to pay lip service. He railed against the oppressive regimes of the left as much as those of the right, insisting that *all* ideologies are corrupt because ideology always hardens into doctrine and doctrine can never match reality.

Fallaci is able to select from the particulars of this one man's life to fashion clear-sighted analyses into the nature of politics and power. The first part, for example, a harrowing retelling of Panagoulis's years of torture and imprisonment, becomes a study of the psychology of torture. We also gain insights into the mind of the "terrorist" and the sort of mental gymnastics that are

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necessary to turn a pacifist into a committed assassin. Along the way we are treated to vivid demonstrations that all fascist regimes are finally identical, and that leftist governments that maim body and spirit "on the pretext of making the world more beautiful" are no better. Clearly, power itself is the enemy.

Thus, starting from a deep probing of an individual life and death, Fallaci fabricates a rich novel of ideas. And the ideas do not stop with the "merely" political: Fallaci places her subject in the most deeply Greek context of all, that of ancient tragedy, as she marvelously adduces one resonant mythic parallel after another on the way to her lover's final submission to his tragic fate.

The translation by William Weaver is uniformly superb. And though the novel itself has a few minor technical quirks —for one thing, it's told entirely in a breathless second person, as though in direct address to the dead lover— it remains a gripping performance throughout.

Peter Brunette

Peter Brunette teaches film and literature at George Mason University. He is writing a book on Roberto Rossellini.

The Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the World by Anthony Smith

(Oxford University Press; $13.95)

We Westerners believe that a free press is a boon not only to ourselves but also to everyone else. According to Anthony Smith, media pundit and author of *Goodbye Gutenberg*, the third world disagrees. UNESCO conferences over the last decade have called for a New International Information Order (akin to the desired New International Economic Order) that would answer the developing nations' complaints about the West's domination of the media in the third world as well as in Europe and North America. Our media, they charge, concentrate on the third world's crises and ignore its fundamental problems. The countries most active in this protest— Algeria, Guyana, Amin's Uganda, Zaire, Tanzania—seem, however, more concerned with keeping embarrassing information from their own citizens than with bringing their viewpoints before the West. The NIIO would institute press controls tantamount to international censorship. After some equivocation, Smith comes down against this solution, but he is deeply sympathetic to the developing nations' frustration over the current system of international reporting.

Gathering news around the world is a staggeringly expensive business, one dominated by the four major Western news agencies: Reuters, Agence France-Press, AP, and UPI. Third world papers are even more dependent on the agencies than are Western journals. Sixty percent of all the news in South American papers, for instance, comes from the four big agencies.

Fundamentally, Western domination of communication is an aspect of our general economic domination. In most of the third world, according to Smith, the only actual alternative to government control of the press is foreign control. (This seems questionable.) In either case, local media are aimed at elites intoxicated with Western ideas and alienated from native culture. Unfortunately, Smith is too busy deploring this situation to consider just why the rest of the world finds Western ideas, movies, TV shows, and even advertising so fascinating. The Soviet Union, a major international broadcaster, captures only two percent of the African radio audience, compared with the BBC's 50 percent.

The most interesting section of Smith's book concerns not the press but the information revolution brought about by computers and satellite communications. Today information is power, and the United States massively dominates the world of information: nine-tenths of all the information stored in computers anywhere is stored here. Reservations for domestic airline flights in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia are processed in Texas; Swedish fire department records are kept in Florida. IBM, the unquestioned master of the world computer market, is now maneuvering, with Comsat and Aetna Life Insurance, to form a communications company—Satellite Business Systems—which would provide supercheap, super-efficient communications and information processing for companies around the world. Centralizing these functions in the US, SBS might succeed in destroying nascent computer companies everywhere else. National regulation and privacy laws would go down the drain. Fear of dependence already has led India and Brazil to restrict imports of computers and to try to foster local manufacture.

The developing nations may require advanced communications and information processing technology—imported or local—in order to prevent being left even further behind by the West. Smith, however, considers "electronic culture" antithetical to indigenous third world traditions. He views the Iranian revolution as a rejection of modern technology, apparently forgetting that Ayatollah Khomeini's influence, before the revolution, was propagated largely by tape cassettes recorded in France and smuggled into Iran.

Pepe Karmel

Pepe Karmel is a New York writer.

Suffer the Future: Policy Choices in Southern Africa by Robert I. Rotberg

(Harvard University Press; $15)

Robert I. Rotberg's *Suffer the Future* tries to clarify the headlines which remind us with increasing urgency of the race war being fought in southern Africa. It makes accessible to the general reader basic information regarding the history and political economy of South Africa, though it also discusses Zimbabwe and Namibia. Rotberg succeeds in writing what he describes as "a book which will be read comfortably on trains and airplanes and in company boardrooms as well as in professional studies." But it is precisely this success in packaging the southern African tragedy so that it can be viewed comfortably which reflects the major flaw in Rotberg's analysis.

Written in the bland prose of a foundation memorandum, *Suffer the Future* offers little that will bring home to readers the systemic cruelties of apartheid. According to Rotberg, for instance, the police "physically intimidate" black dissenters. In fact, the police routinely torture them. Shattered

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teeth, brain damage, mutilated genitals: for blacks these are the consequences of protest. Rotberg neglects to mention what is certainly one of the most heinous practices of social control under apartheid: the herding of black male workers into single-sex hostels, where they remain segregated from their families throughout most of the year while they work in the mines which fuel white prosperity. And he further obscures a critical reading of South African tyranny by resorting to certain familiar but misleading analogies. He assures his audience, for example, that for all the brutality of the South African authorities, their depredations are "less random and therefore less an instrument of terror than the state-licensed violence of Idi Amin's Uganda or François Duvalier's Haiti." This contention, at least insofar as it applies to the majority of South Africans, is probably false. According to on-the-scene observers, such as the Afrikaaner novelist André Brink, black South Africans are fully as vulnerable to unpredictable attack as those victimized under third world dictatorships. But apart from the dubious accuracy of Rotberg's comparison, one must also question what impels him to import it needlessly into his book. The comparison, it seems, is calculated not to illuminate the nature of apartheid, but rather to highlight the all too obvious fact that blacks, too, are capable of oppressing other blacks.

Although the overall impression left by *Suffer the Future* unduly minimizes the horrors of apartheid, Rotberg does at times acknowledge how ruthlessly obsessed South African whites are with maintaining their power. For them, he observes, "white privilege and the prevention of black rule" is "the only issue of consequence." As for the regime's announced intentions to dismantle "petty" apartheid—taking down "whites only" signs—and ease employment restrictions, Rotberg correctly characterizes such stratagems as "movement that is better designated as maneuvering." These ploys, he suggests, are largely public relations gambits, attempts to deflect hostile criticism. He also notes that significant change can be won only through forceful struggle. "Diminutions of white hegemony in Africa," he writes, "have distinctly depended upon demonstrations of black power."

Yet having noted the power of white intransigence and the necessity for black militance, Rotberg conjures up visions of compromise as opposed to confrontation, evolution as opposed to revolution. Hostile to a radical mass movement—the only force capable of establishing majority rule—Rotberg promotes peaceful negotiations even though he observes that the white minority is unwilling to relinquish peaceably its monopoly over political power. His preferred scenario is "an ordered, leadership-influenced, evolutionary resolution between white and black South Africans. . . ." At first blush this agenda seems merely naive. It reveals, however, something far more troublesome than innocence. For the programmatic choices that flow from Rotberg's agenda bespeak a sophisticated conservatism that values order above black liberation. Echoing the prevailing sentiments of America's foreign policy elites, Rotberg evinces far more concern about the future plight of white South Africa than the present suffering of its black victims.

Nothing better epitomizes this misplaced solicitude than Rotberg's declaration that "the task of Western statesmen is to nudge, cajole, and otherwise make possible the development within South Africa of potential systems that deliver full participation to blacks without submerging the whites." Nudging and cajoling, of course, are futile gestures that already have been tried for too long. Blacks, moreover, demand not "participation" but power. Why, they ask, does the legitimacy of majority rule suddenly collapse in the face of a black majority? Finally the long-run prospects for the white minority do indeed appear dim. This, however, is not cause for dismay, as Rotberg suggests. Rather the distant but foreseeable overthrow of apartheid and its adherents is a promising reminder that domination, no matter how powerful, cannot triumph indefinitely.

Randall Kennedy

Randall Kennedy is a student at Yale Law School.

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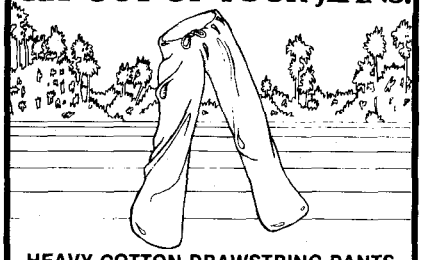

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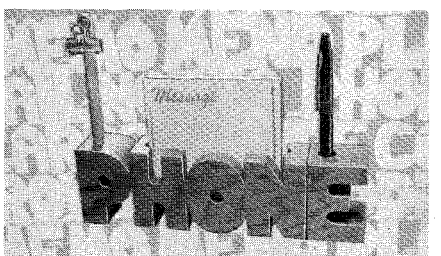

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Commuter's Diarist

Flights

Utopians are remembered for their fantasies. The 18th-century French utopian Comte Claude Henri de Saint-Simon is remembered especially for his vision of the collective demise of the great influentials of France. Let's suppose, he said, that the officers of government, the counselors of state, the most important lawyers, and the big rich were suddenly (along with various clerics, nobles, and their courtesans) to disappear. What would happen? The French surely would grieve, he concluded, but France would not be affected, at least not adversely. I have a comparable fantasy about the flights I take on my twice or thrice a week commute between Boston and Washington. The cargo on the seven a.m. out of Logan or the five p.m. out of National is made up of accredited wise men and people of affairs: fixers and tribunes, members past and those now aspiring to the Council of Economic Advisers, luminaries from the private brain industries, experts on energy alternatives, toters for technology transfer, practitioners of conflict resolution, planners of productivity increase, propagandists for capital needs, pamphleteers for tax reform, self-appointed plenipotentiaries of the poor, well-appointed emissaries of the poor, partners in the prestigious law firm Dewey, Cheatham and Howe, MIT spokesmen for the policy of science, Harvard advocates for the science of policy, and yours truly, commentator on this and that. Let's suppose our flight somehow disappeared into the Bermuda Triangle. What would happen? Not much, maybe not even grief.

From time to time at *TNR* we receive articles submitted for publication over the signature of one or another public figure. Unlike other magazines, we don't print these—in what some say is a too-finicky belief that ghost-written writing is a fraud on the reader. The reason you see Pat Moynihan and Gene McCarthy in these pages is that we believe they write what they say they write. I suppose it's utopian fantasy to hope that someday we'll have an American political leadership whose leading lights might write for this magazine. Nowadays, though, I'm content to hear that one of them just reads it. Not that I think they're reading something else instead, not even *National Review*. Much of the political class, of course, reads nothing, and it shows. Trevelyan tells us that in the 17th century parliamentarians quoted scripture in the 18th century, the classics, in the 19th, Shakespeare, in the 20th, each other. American politicians quote themselves, which is to say their own speechwriters. What politicians say on platforms reflects what they read. This is why there hasn't been a great presidential utterance in years. Note the big yawn with which publishers have greeted the news that Jimmy Carter is writing his memoirs. There was a time when presidents read *TNR* regularly. Woodrow Wilson was accused of trying to dictate its editorial positions. I remember some historian saying that FDR counted *TNR* among his reading obligations. JFK once was photographed flying off to Hyannis clutching a copy under his arm. Richard Nixon may not have read the magazine, but he railed against it—on the tapes, no less. I don't know for sure that Gerald Ford read *TNR* but he once sent us a letter about something snippy I'd written (and now regret having written) about him. There's no evidence that Jimmy Carter read us; and now Ronald Reagan is about to be president. When particularly depressed about American politics, TRB looks longingly at the British parliamentary system. That's where this week I get my consolation at the current neglect of *TNR* in the Oval Office. The two top contenders for leader of the Labour party, Michael Foot (who came out on top) and Denis Healey (who has offered to be his deputy), not only read *TNR*, they also write for it: Healey regularly over a long period; Foot more occasionally, but also more recently (December 1, 1979). Not stump speeches rendered as written prose, mind you, but thoughtful essays, literate and argumentative. Only a few weeks ago I wrote Foot to ask him for a piece on Jonathan Swift. About which satirist of politics and society might I ask Ted Kennedy to write, or Fritz Mondale? Literacy isn't everything, I know, and it's not necessarily a prerequisite for great leadership. But it is something.

Eavesdropping on a conversation in the pew behind me at services recently, I heard a lawyer claiming that he'd just written a will for a woman who wanted her body to be cremated and the ashes strewn over the floors of Bloomingdale's in New York. Her lawyer explained that this was the only way she'd be sure her children would come to visit. Bloomie's is the Athens of the consumer culture; I was there myself last week. You may recall the discreetly chic brown shopping bag with block lettering they supplied for carrying your purchases home. No longer, at least for now. The store has done itself up along a Chinese theme, as it did last year along an Israeli one. The shopping bag of the moment is a shiny Chinese black and orange-red landscape, embossed with the legend "China: Heralding the Dawn of a New Era." That's the utopian fantasy born in the Long March and nurtured brutally for 30 years from Beijing. It's true, of course, as the old pro-Soviet left keeps saying, that the Chinese are capitalist roaders and deviationists from the prescribed communist regimen. All the same, who ever would have thought that the slick blades and ladies who buy their discretionaries at Bloomingdale's would end up as walking advertisements for some cheap agitprop slogan? Maybe they don't really notice the words or, noticing them, don't register what they mean. You may have noticed in the papers that the Marlboro man has arrived in China. This is evidence for the theory of the great convergence.

The Republican inheritors were out in full force at a reception for Menachem Begin, the first big Washington do for a foreign dignitary since the Democrats' Black Tuesday. The good news from the hors d'oeuvres table is that Jerry Falwell is not slated to head the FBI. Otherwise I'm sorry to disappoint, but the Reagan legions I met and talked to for a bit—the controversial Richard Allen, for example—are hardly less engaging than the Georgia crowd I first encountered four years ago at a similar event. But there are some differences: the ascendant folk believe that politics is meant to serve social philosophy, they are keenly aware that the country is in crisis, and they don't seem to be vengeful. I know already that we'll be much at odds with them. Greed is about to be enthroned officially. And, as Ronald Steel has written, "They say, with disarming simplicity, that they want to 'get government off our backs.' But, their ambition is quite different . . . to harness the vast coercive power of the state . . . for ensuring social conformity." But I was interested to hear that many read *TNR* and read it closely. Which is to say that the Republicans still take the opposition and the notion of opposition seriously. In grim times, that's one good sign.

M.P.

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